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THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE.

BY

WILLIAM HOWITT.

"It is Calamity which proves the man: the self-sustained is overthrown by it; the God-sustained is ennobled by it."—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

"Time, dark with wrongs and red with patriot blood, is the enfranchiser of nations."—SIR PHILIP STANTON'S ORATIONS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is a power in youth which rises, with a wonderful elasticity, above the roughest onslaughts of fortune. Hope lives with a winged vigour in the heart; and when the charm of a new but deeply struck and worthy love is added, a young man soon throws off the envenomed mantle of care, and stands forward with fresh and more determined resolves, daring the world, in his untried bravery, to do its worst. Philip felt something of this exhilarating effect as he strode on over the wide heaths of Surrey, steering

the most direct way for Winchester. The air was fresh and bracing, and the wide views which he ever and anon caught from some moorland height seemed to send into his bosom an exuberance of life. He remembered the generous and true hearts that he left behind him; he dwelt with something of wonder on the new friend that seemed to have been thrown in his way in Jeremiah Sterland, and vowed in himself yet to justify the confidence he had inspired. As he strode forward through rustic villages, or paced the banks of a clear fresh stream, the blood seemed to dance in his veins with new life, and the future to present only a noble arena, in which truth, talent, and enterprise might achieve almost anything that it pleased. Frequently, as he dashed along, borne, as it were, on the wings of an eloquent enthusiasm, he called to mind the scene at the door of Mrs. Rudd, when the sturdy mathematician stepped forth in his ire, and cried, "Lodger

indeed!" and the haughty baronet shrunk as if shrivelled by fire at the sound; and he laughed aloud. At noon he entered a village inn, and made a luxurious meal on eggs and bacon, and fried trout from a neighbouring brook—and, after a rest, pursued his way. Towards evening he began to feel his spirits somewhat sobered, and the road to grow long. He wished to reach Alton for the night, but had taken a cross road by direction of a countryman, and found himself wandering in a forest, which abounded with numerous crossing tracks, without a guide-post or a dwelling from which to obtain information. Suddenly, as the sun was about setting, he came upon a brook in a deep wooded valley, and, crossing a foot-bridge of a single plank, found himself in front of a gipsy camp. A large fire blazed in the midst of the opening in the woods, around which were pitched a number of tents, and at which sat a number of the wandering tribe warming themselves.

The usual assemblage of carts, horses, asses, and dogs caught the traveller's eye, and his ears were instantly assailed by a clamour of dogs, which flew in furious haste, as if to tear him to pieces.

A number of dark tall fellows sprung from their seats at the fire, and with fierce yells called the dogs back, but in vain, and the next moment the men were amongst them, laying on them lustily with cudgels. Philip himself was armed with a stout ash-plant, with which he defended himself adroitly, and gave the brutes some telling blows; but one infuriate beast, a huge brindled lurcher, sprung desperately on him, showing a formidable set of teeth, and was only prevented piercing his fangs in him by receiving the point of Philip's stick in his throat. With renewed fury he seized the stick, and tore and shook at it wildly, till one of the dusky fellows grappled him by the throat, shook him off, and slipped an iron chain

through his collar ring, and dragged him away with sundry lusty punches, but still foaming and struggling with rage.

Philip looked quietly at the stick, which was bitten nearly through, and, showing it to the men, said—

"That would have told pretty well on my leg—do you think such monsters should be loose?"

"A thousand pardons, your honour," said the fellows all at once; "we didn't expect anyone this way to-night, or we wouldn't have untied the scamp; but we generally do this to stretch his legs a bit at supper-time. We'll take care he shan't be loose again while you're here—and as for the rest, they won't hurt you."

Philip had now drawn nearer to the fire, where a number of women of different ages, and children of all ages—some of the latter having issued in their shirts from their beds—received him with many curtsies, and much of the

smooth palaver of the tribe. Philip asked how far he was from Alton.

"Ah, your worship is a good five miles yet from Alton, and the forest road is none of the best," said an old crone.

"Pshaw!" said a huge black fellow, "as much five as you are five-and-twenty, Bess; it's not more than two by the directest road."

"And if the gentleman went your road, Roger," said the old crone, "he'd never see Alton to-night, I'll swear."

"He'll see it in less than an hour, old hell-cat," said the fellow, scowling, "if he takes me as a guide."

"But take a seat, palla," said another woman, "and rest yourself a moment; the moon is rising, and the road will be clear enough over the hill."

With that she placed a tinker's leathern wallet on the ground by him, and threw a folded blanket on it.

Philip did not much like the looks of some of his male companions, nor much more those of some of the old women, who talked with one another ever and anon in their own language. One man lay as if asleep on the other side of the fire, but Philip could see his black basilisk eye glancing occasionally at him from under his black matted hair—but Philip was not of a fearful nature, and he determined to take all coolly. He asked for directions for his way, and at the same moment received twenty different ones from the group, who all spoke almost at once. He smiled, and said he was afraid he could not go all those ways in half-an-hour; and as he was hungry he should be glad of something to eat, if they had it.

There was a pot hanging over the fire, from which issued a most savoury smell; and as he took out half-a-crown and presented it to a woman who was already preparing to examine the cookery, he soon saw a fine fat

turkey forked up out of the kettle, and placed on a great tin dish before him. Bread and salt, and a bottle of brandy, were at once placed at his elbow, and, with some pure water from the brook, he soon made a hearty meal, without troubling himself to ask out of what farm-yard the well-fed turkey came.

Meanwhile his eyes had been reconnoitering the figures before him, and were soon arrested by one in particular.

It was that of a tall young woman, who stood by the fire, with her scarlet cloak held up short by her arms, which were crossed on her chest, and her dark under-dress, showing a richness and a grace in strange contrast to that of all about her. But the dress was not more remarkable than her person, which was of the most startling beauty. Her figure, her brown but exquisitely modelled face—her large, dark, flashing eyes—her lustrous raven locks—put back from her brow, and hanging in dusky profusion on her neck—were such as

might belong to a Cleopatra or a Semiramis. There was a wild and bewitching grace in her bearing, and the rings that flashed on her fingers in the fire-light, the heavy gold chain on her neck, and jewelled brooch which fastened the scarlet mantle, showed that she was not only wealthy for one of her tribe, but had all the passion for display which such proud charms could inspire.

The beauty of the woods evidently saw the fascination which her appearance had exercised on the young stranger, and enjoyed it—but with a mien of well-sustained indifference, which no woman of the world could have better assumed. The eyes of the whole dusky group were just as fully aware of the youth's wonder; but the power of the extraordinary beauty of Helen Stanley was so universal, that it excited only the usual hope of the more profit by its influence. Philip's attention was drawn from this regal-looking damsel by another woman of the tribe, who,

with all its flattery and unabashed freedom, offered to tell him his fortune.

"If I must have it told," said Philip "it shall be by the young woman yonder," nodding towards the beauty.

"Ah! Nell carries all the favour," said the prophetess; and the Cleopatra of the wood, without further delay, glided with a queen-like grace to the place, and stood before Philip, who rose up and offered his hand with a gold piece in it.

She took the money, dropped it, without looking at it, into an embroidered pouch which hung at her waist; and then fixing a glance on Philip's face, with a pair of the most dark and impressive eyes, that made him feel as if he were looked through and through by some female deity of ancient India or Egypt, she placed her dusky but finely-rounded and taper finger in the palm of his hand, and said, "So young! and yet such a cross in the line of life. There is a lady here, beautiful

and constant, and yet—ah! it is jealousy, but not the jealousy of love, it is jealousy of fortune, of man's ambition. Young man, you have an enemy as well as a friend. He is fair, smooth as the pebble of the brook, and as slippery; but your star is above his star—you need not fear him. But what! a deeper peril—judges, lawyers, axes, and scaffolds, bloody deeds—that can be no vision of these days. Ah! they are gone, and the Rajah-mio is safe as ever. Son of fortune, you are destined to great wealth and honours."

Philip smiled, for the latter part of the vaticination appeared so melo-dramatic, that it at once effaced what went before it, and which had no little astonished him.

But the lovely sorceress went on, unmindful of his smile.

"To wealth, ancient and hereditary. Yet there stand three strong men in the path, but they are but men of mist—a wind, a rush

of water, and where are they? I see only the Rajah-mio riding beside a lady fair and gracious, and the sun shines on a fair grey mansion, and the bells are ringing, ringing, ringing now. The Rajah-mio is a magistrate where his fathers were. And who is that? A woman of our tribe—young, handsome, yet poor, faded, fettered, kneeling before him, praying for mercy!" The beautiful woman shook at the vision she had raised, and her dusky cheek assumed an ashy hue, and she whispered tremblingly—

"And when that comes, will the Rajah-mio remember, and have pity?"

"I may safely promise that," said Philip, with a mixture of wonder and misbelief, as he withdrew his hand, and only upbraided himself for his folly in thus wasting time, whilst the night found him amid these suspicious people. He turned to thank the vaticinatrix, however, but she was no longer there. The wild group had all stood listening,

and assured him that every word would come true. The moon was just rising over the wood in the direction which he had to go, and he bade good-bye to the wild tribe, and turned away.

"But your worship will never find the nearest way," said some of them; "and there are desperate fellows, poachers and thieves, in the forest."

"We'll show his worship," said two of the fellows, "through the shaws, and to the Alton highway, and then all is plain."

Philip took a double-barrelled pistol from the breast-pocket of his coat. "A brace of these," he said, "are good friends on the way,"—examined the priming, and put it back.

The proposed guides glanced at each other, but assented that the Rajah need not fear with these glow-worms in his hand; but at that moment the handsome damsel stepped up to the fire, and said, "Come along, Boswell and Lovel, I will join you. Rajah-mio, dismiss

all fear—I will insure your safety." The gipsy girl, with the air of an amazon, bade the two men go on before, and they at once obeyed her.

She then followed with Philip; and as they strode forward at an amazing pace, she answered his questions as to her tribe and their manner of life—and whether she would not like to leave it for one more becoming her extraordinary endowments of form, and evidently of mind.

She said, "No—that no life of splendour in town could compensate for the liberty of the woodland. That she and her people were from the New Forest, and had only made a short journey for change, and to-morrow should go back."

Philip could not help casting, from time to time, a glance at the superb woman, as she strode on by his side, with a motion as full of dignity and elegance as if she had been reared in a palace. The brown but beauti-

fully formed cheek, with the violet tints of health glowing in it—the dark eye, shaded by its dark fringe—the delicately moulded mouth, full of expression; and the whole air of this forest queen was so imposing that Philip could not help contrasting her with the fair and English beauty of Paulina, and wishing that she could see her.

"And can such a lovely woman as you," said Philip, with an honest flattery, "be content to throw yourself away on some rude boor of your tribe?" speaking in an undertone, that the men a-head might not catch what he said.

"Hamadee Moru, or Helen Stanley, as she is called in your English," said the beauty, her eye flashing, and her cheek brightening with the consciousness of the compliment, "will find her mate when it is the right time. The Romani have men worthy to stand up before the proudest court of Christendom —strong as the lion, active as the tiger, lithe

as the serpent of Tangier. If the Romano beauty could draw the Carew from the hills of Devon, and the handsome squire from the fair domains of Nottinghamshire—if the bonny Romano king could wile the lady of Cassillis from her Scottish palace, and from her lordly husband, what then? Let the young Rajah-mio not trouble himself on that head."

"But your forest haunts," said Philip, "are every day disappearing. The wood is felled, the heath is enclosed, the green lane forbidden you—where, then, will you, ere long, find a place?"

"There is room enough still," replied the eloquent maiden, "for the exiled people of the far East. The sierras of Andalusia are yet open to the Zingaros; there is yet space on the heaths of Bohemia; and if they were closed, the wide pampas and savannahs of America will receive the Romano for ages to come."

"And do the Gipsies of England, or

Romani, as you call them," said Philip, in surprise, "really hold any communication with the Zingari and Zigeuner of the Continent?"

"Assuredly," she replied. "Padaloun Moru, my father, is now in the distant Chili; and think you that I have always loitered beneath the oaks of Minstead, or the beeches of Brockenhurst? I have spent many days, young as I am, in the orange woods of Spain, amongst the vines and olive trees of Italy, and under the tall tannin of Bohemian hills; and she sung—

"Kommt der Vogel geflogen,
Setzt sich nieder auf mein Füss."

"What!" said Philip, "do you read German?"

"We read nothing, Rajah-mio, but the words invisible to you, which are written in the hand of every son of earth; but I have heard that air often sung by the German colonists in the Bannat of Hungary."

Philip looked in growing wonder on his extraordinary companion, when she suddenly stopped, and saying—

"We are destined some day to meet again, but there now is the road, and you no longer need our guidance."

They had cleared the skirts of the forest; the moon shone like day; the road lay direct before the traveller, and, with a low, graceful curtsey, she bade him good-bye. Philip thanked her for her kindness, and offered her a fresh piece of money; but she gave it to her two comrades, and the next moment they had vanished in the woods.

Philip pursued his way to Alton with a strange medley of fancies in his head. Spite of reason and philosophy, the wisest man cannot free himself from the longing to look into the future, nor from the spells which even the outcasts of civilization are sure to excite over the imagination through that

feeling. The image of the gipsy beauty, arrayed in her native grace, like a proud queen of romance, and the singular striking upon great troubles in his life and connections, though mingled with so much that appeared the very extravagance of artful invention, still pursued him. The late painful circumstances, the enemy so like Hargrave Freemantle, the three strong men betwixt him and hereditary wealth—these were things which intensely amazed him. It seemed as if some mocking spirit, which knew the truth, and wove it up with lies, actually spoke through this child of eastern origin; but that these strong men should vanish at once from his path, and leave him heir of his ancestor's estates, was, if more than a marvellous accident in her speech, a horrible lie and temptation of the devil. How astonished would he have been could he really have looked into the future of this wild child of the forest—and seen her, as was really

the case, drawn by her glittering and dangerous beauty and spirit from her woods to the haunts of affluent splendour, to strange adventures, to crime, to passionate revenge, and a miserable death!

From Alton, Philip, the next morning, resumed his march to Winchester, which he reached soon after noon. To his mind, overflowing with historic knowledge, that venerable capital of Saxon England was a place too delightful to be quitted that day. He wandered through the ancient and exquisite cathedral, where every column, window, and carved shrine, and embossed ceiling was a piece of poetry. He trod the spot where Rufus sleeps, where Queen Mary wedded the proud Spaniard; he saw the piles raised by Wykeham, and that where Alfred lies, to the reproach of England; wandered through the cloisters of St. Cross, and by the air-like transparency of the Itchen; and reluctantly the next morning saw its venerable town and

spires sink behind him. The next evening beheld him wearily walk into Salisbury; and on the fourth day, climbing the height of Old Sarum, and bidding adieu to the tall and lofty spire of Salisbury, he advanced on to the wide plain, the grey piles of Stonehenge still growing solemnly on his eye. Thence, after a rest full of many thoughts amid its gigantic stones, its surrounding mounds and circles, and grass-grown ridges, he directed his course northward, and, as the sun was near setting, looked from the smooth downs into a long vale, studded with village after village, lying amid their enclosures, with each its low, grey church-tower, and its enveloping trees; whilst one long tortuous line marked the woody banks of the crystal stream that winds through them, and seems to bind them together as by a natural cord. The nearest of these, he learned from a waggoner who came up the hill with his team covered with gingling bells, and his bright yellow waggon

ornamented in front with paintings of great crimson roses, was his destined abode of Slumbercumb.

CHAPTER II.

It was nearly dark as Philip reached the hamlet, and inquired his way to the school-house. He had the name of Nathan Spode given him as the tenant of the adjoining cottage where he was to lodge, and opening the door of the house pointed out to him by a boy, he found himself in a desolate-looking tenement, with a brick floor worn into considerable holes. A heavy-looking labourer was sitting, with his shoes off, at supper with his wife, a bold and very ordinary-looking woman, on roasted potatoes and dripping. A number of children, varying from a shock-headed lad

of twelve, in barrocking jacket and trousers, to a dirty child in petticoats, were seated, or rather sprawling, on the floor, engaged in the same consumption of potatoes, and flinging their husks around them as they scooped out their contents with teeth and finger. A small fire of wood burned on the hearth, for there was no grate, and a few mean articles of furniture only gave a more poverty-stricken air to the place. The man and his wife sat and stared at Philip as he advanced into the room, and asked if that were the house at which the schoolmaster lodged.

"When there is one," said the woman; "but there has na been one these four months and more."

"But I am now come to be the schoolmaster," said Philip.

"You!" said the people, looking still more astonished, "yourn th' school-mester. Why, you looken more liker a parson. Laus alive! we are na used to such fine gentlemen."

"But," said Philip, "such as I am you must take up with me for awhile, till you get a better. Will you let me have some tea and a chop, for I am very tired," and he put down his bundle and seated himself in a wooden-bottomed chair.

"Tea! a chop!" ejaculated the woman; "have you got 'em in your pocket?"

"Well, no," said Philip, "I don't carry such things with me."

"Then you're not likely to get 'em here," said the woman, laughing and picking up the dirty child, and crying fiercely to the others, "get up, you brats, and get to bed wi' you!" at the same time hastening their movements by a slap on the back of one and cuff on the head of another, and so hurrying them all up stairs. As she was some time putting her uncouth charges to bed, amid sundry repeated buffets, and as many outbursts of squalling and blubbering, Philip, who began to have very strange feelings as to his new home,

asked the man to go out and fetch in the necessary articles for his tea.

The fellow grinned, and said—

"Nay, we're na going to Waterdale to neet after tea and sugar and butcher-meat."

"Why?" asked Philip, "are there no such things in this hamlet?"

"Nay," said the man, "wer'n neither butcher nor grosher here."

"And how far is it to Waterdale?" asked Philip.

"Two good miles is it," he replied; "and they may wend it as like for me to neet."

"What then *can* you find me for supper?" asked Philip; "for something I must have."

The woman, who was now come back again, and began to clear the hearth, by kicking the potato husks forward with her foot, and then collecting them in a dust-pan, and putting them into the wooden bowl on the table amongst the remains of their luxurious meal,

and carrying them out of doors, probably to the pig, now said—

"When sich great gentlemen demean themselves to larning a school, they should let poor folks know beforehand."

"But," said Philip, "I did not know myself till near the hour of setting off. However, the question is, what have you? You've bread and cheese, at all events, and you can get me a pint of beer at the public-house."

"Un!" said the woman, "one may see that ye didna know where you were coming. What we have in the house is just what you'n seen — potatoes and salt. Such luxuries as bread and cheese dunna come here; and there's no public in the place; and d'ye think now that I shall sit up to roast taters again to-night? Never believe it, man."

The prospect began to assume a very famine-like aspect to the tired and hungry traveller. "Is this to be my domicile?"

he said, inly. "Am I really in England in the nineteenth century?" And then, speaking up, he said:—

"Well, what's to be done? I don't mean to starve, my good people. The former schoolmaster did not live on air?"

"He lived on what he could get out of his wages—five shillings a-week—twelve pounds a-year the salary, and half-a-crown a-week for lodging and doing for."

"What!" said Philip—"half-a-crown a-week to live on! What sort of a man was that?"

"He werena a man at all," said the woman; "he was a lad of sixteen, and he died of consumption, and were buried last November at Waterdale."

The prospects of education and of educators in Slumbercumb were rather startling to our hero. He sat in silence some time, and then said:—

"Well, Mrs. Spode, I assure you I am not inclined to follow his example; and so, if you

can find me no supper, I must out and seek one."

"There's a handful of flour in th' pantry. I can make you a hasty pudding, and there's a little buttermilk that I meant for the children's breakfast."

"Let me have it by all means," said the hungry young man, "and in the morning we can forage for more."

The pudding was made, and poured out into a brown and yellow earthenware dish, and a wooden spoon laid to eat it with, and a brown mug of buttermilk set on the table by it. Philip fell to with the best appetite he had. Hungry as he was, he could not praise the repast. The buttermilk was sour, and had to him so abominable a flavour that he begged for some water in exchange. He was then shown to his chamber. It was a desolate-looking room, with a dirty-looking plaster floor, and open to the rafters. There was a stump-bedstead, on which lay some-

thing as a bed, covered with a dingy quilt; and there was a window, half of which was built up with brick, and the other half considerably indebted to paper for keeping out the air. There was no chair, not even a bit of mat by the bedside, nor anything except the floor or bed on which to lay his clothes. A rush-light was given him to see his way into bed by, and he was left to his reflections. They were certainly none of the most cheerful.

Philip turned down the bed-clothes. There were sheets which appeared clean, but coarse, and he ventured to try such refuge for the night as it offered. But he was soon conscious of a most disagreeable odour, resembling greasy and rancid wool, proceeding from his couch, which, had he been more conversant with abject poverty, he would have recognized as that of moths, which, no doubt, were by thousands making their loathsome feast on the old decaying mattress. Disgusted by the smell,

Philip would have abandoned the odious bed altogether, had he known how to keep himself warm during the night. He felt inclined to rise and seek some better lodging, but, utter stranger as he was to the place, in the pitch dark night where was he to go?

There appeared no help for him; and therefore, hardening himself to his fate, he was fortunate enough to fall asleep, and did not wake till daylight. He lost no time in springing up, dressing by the aid of an old piece of scratched and mildewed looking-glass reared against the window, and hastened downstairs. There sat the man and his wife at their breakfast, this time a dish of boiled, instead of roasted, potatoes, and a cake of black heavy bread, which had probably been carefully hoarded overnight for the occasion.

Philip nodded a "good-morning" to the lumpish couple, whom poverty and dense ignorance seemed to have made brutal, and,

issuing out, glanced round to discover some more hospitable abode. The hamlet appeared to consist of only some dozen or so of similar huts, built chiefly of lath and mud, and whitewashed; but at a little distance he descried a farm-house, standing amid its trees and barns, and thither he made his way. There a very different scene met his eyes. A capacious straw-yard, with cattle at their racks, fowls, turkeys, ducks, geese, and pigeons, besides sundry fat pigs, bespoke rural plenty. He was shown into a low sort of half kitchen, half sitting-room, where sat the farmer and his wife at a goodly breakfast of coffee and bacon, and white bread and butter. The farmer and his wife were to all appearance betwixt fifty and sixty—plain, homespun sort of people, but there was a wholesome heartiness about them. They arose respectfully on Philip's entrance, supposing him some clergyman or gentleman. And no little was their astonishment when

they learnt that he was the new schoolmaster.

"Why, the Lord bless us!" said the old man, "Mr. Sterland has sent us a gentleman indeed! Sure, he must think it were for a Lunnun school. But, sit down, sir; sit down, and get some breakfast."

Philip was not backward in accepting the offer; and during the breakfast he explained that he was only come till another person could be found; and described his miserable reception at Spode's.

"Drunken dog," said farmer Stulp; "starves hisself and family to death. Starved poor Pinnegar th' boy ut toght; no, that's not the shop for the like o' you, sir. You mun come here, Mr. What's-your-name?"

"Stanton," said Philip.

"Well, Mr. Stanton, you mun come here, and do as we do."

"I shall be most happy," said Philip. "And what shall I pay you?"

"What say you, mother?" said the farmer, turning to his wife. "Ten shillings, or so, would do it, I think."

"Oh, yes, very well," replied Mrs. Stulp, and the thing was settled.

Philip was shown a nice little room, clean as a new penny, and sweet with rose-leaves and lavender lurking in the recesses of old walnut-tree drawers, and looking into the garden. This arranged, much to his satisfaction, Philip inquired after the number of scholars.

"Why," said the farmer, "there was never above a score, but poor Pinnegar let them dwindle away to three or four, and since his death the school has been shut up. But," said the farmer, "we mun muster them up again. The lads mun ha' some larning to be sure; for, as the old proverb has it, 'larning's better nor house and land.'"

Philip discovered that the school was an ancient grammar-school; that the proprietor

of the estate, who lived a long way off, claimed the income, and allowed the munificent sum of twelve pounds a-year for a schoolmaster; that there was no church in the hamlet, but that the people, such as did go to church, went to Waterdale, where the Squire's brother, the rector, kept a curate, and also lived a long way off, where the Squire did.

The farmer walked with Philip to the school, and they called at Spodes for the key. Mrs. Spode handed out the key to the farmer without a word, and, casting a malicious glance at Philip, turned again and banged the door to.

"A sweet creature that," said the farmer; "she should not draw my beer for me; her varjuice look would turn it sour in a twinkle." With that he put the key in the lock, and after some difficulty forced open the door. The place was partially lighted, for the shutters were closed, but there was light

enough to see a swarm of some living things scampering in sudden alarm into holes and corners.

"As I live," said the farmer, "the place is alive with rats! Ha! ha! who'd ever think of the rats coming to school. And they needna, for they 're sharp enew without."

They proceeded to throw open the shutters, and then a singular scene presented itself. The labourer Spode had evidently made a store-house of it for his potatoes, and for a pile of fern and reeds for bedding his pig; and the rats, attracted by the potatoes and the warmth of the fern heap in winter, had found their way in, and housed there in droves. They had made burrows under the decayed and broken floor of wood, and had thrown out heaps of earth upon it. Into this retreat they had now betaken themselves, and the two visitors surveyed the scene with wonder. The walls were grown green and yellow with damp; long lines of wet had run down from

the roof, and left their dark traces—and a host of creeping things, which would have been a treasure for a naturalist, were crawling up and down it. Wood-lice, black and shiny vermicular existences, and woolly nests of spider's eggs glued to the wall, ready to burst into life whenever returning warmth should penetrate this desolate place.

"Before you can begin operations, Mr. Stanton," said the farmer, "we must have the carpenter and white-washer here, and some coals laid in for fire; and I shall ride off at once for Hawkins the varmin-hunter to bring his dogs and ferrets, and hunt the varmin out of the floor, or they'll have at my ricks next."

Whilst these operations were going on, which occupied several days, Philip took the opportunity to look round and study the geography of the place. He saw that the hamlet stood on the edge of a wide flat, into which the valley there opened. Through

this flat meandered a small stream, which there scarcely seemed to move, though above and below it lapsed cheerfully through pleasant meadows in many a wandering amongst its willow and alder bushes. Up the valley lay several scattered cottages like those in Slumbercumb itself, and about a mile below the flat or plain, in the narrow valley, lay Waterdale, a somewhat larger hamlet, with five or six considerable farm-houses, interspersed with the cottages of labourers. There was there an ancient church, built of flint-stones, with free-stone quoinings, and a large church-yard, with its old yews and a stupendous sycamore, surrounded at its base by a seat for the people coming from a distance to rest, or when waiting for service on Sundays. There was a pleasant sort of quiet in the aspect of the place, which pleased him much better than Slumbercumb; and a school-house of modern brick adjoining, from which came a busy hum of children at their lessons.

When farmer Stulp had enjoyed the fun of hunting out the rats, the particulars of which he related with much unction at dinner to his wife and Philip, he mounted his pony, and rode round to tell the cottars that there was a new master come, and that school would begin on Monday. It was now Saturday, and Philip, who had expected letters from Craythorne, and found none, set off to the post-town, six miles off, to see whether they were not lying there. There were none, and a sudden cloud fell over his spirits. He had calculated confidently on hearing from Paulina and Charles, if not from Helen. He had been eight days from Dorking; but to him, who had been every hour of those days occupied by new objects, it seemed almost as many weeks. He questioned the postmaster whether he had sent no letters to Slumbercumb addressed "Philip Stanton?" The man said, "No; there was no such person there." Philip explained that he was that person.

The postmaster was positive no such letters had gone, as he should have noticed the name. The carrier came twice a-week—Wednesdays and Saturdays—and would call for the Slumbercumb letters, which lay on the counter, in half an hour. He could look at them.

Philip turned them over eagerly, in the hope that the desired letters were yet there. There was not one, and his mind felt a deeper and more uneasy gloom. He wrote out his address in a very large, plain hand, at farmer Stulp's, and begged the man particularly to send on any that came. The man said, of course he should, with a tone of resentment, as if suspected of neglect; and Philip, with a deep sense of depression, turned his steps back again. One only thought cheered him—perhaps his friends waited to hear from him first; the thought gave new impetus to his movements, and with rapid strides he made his way back to Slumbercumb. That evening he sat in his chamber, and wrote notes to

Charles, to Paulina, to Helen, to Mrs. Rudd, to Mr. Sterland. Not that he wrote to them all at once, but he commenced a series of letters to these individuals, which were all living at once in his mind.

When called down to supper, his thoughts were still running on what he had to say; and the old farmer talked a great deal about the school, and the people of the neighbourhood, which ought very much to have informed the new schoolmaster, but which was lost on him, and only drew from him the monosyllabic response of "yes" and "no," or at most the dissyllable "indeed!" When the cloth was drawn, the farmer bade the wife bring pipes and glasses, and, opening the corner-cupboard, brought out a bottle.

"That, young man," he said, with a patronizing air, "is genuine Schiedam, and will cheer your heart, and drive care away. I see you are rather hipped that you've got no letter—from your mother, mayhap, or

your sweetheart? Well, that's no business of mine, but all that will come round. Posts are slow down into these country places."

"Oh! they are, are they?" said Philip, catching eagerly at this explanation.

"Ay, that they are; I've known a letter be nearly a fortnight coming from Lunnun, though they're seldom so late as that now; though I think that Winkburn, the post-master, does let them lie over sometimes, when he's busy with his grocer-customers on a market-day."

"Perhaps, after all," said Philip, "he might not have taken them out of the box; he did seem busy, and was rather snappish."

"Very likely," said the farmer; "and so they'll come on Wednesday; we'll give the carrier special word about them."

Till Wednesday! To Philip's feverish expectation that seemed ages; but he resolved to run over again on Monday evening, post his own, and make a fresh inquiry; and he

now endeavoured resolutely to drive away his thoughts and listen to the farmer's chat, which, in truth, was very interesting in itself, being full of the statistics of the neighbourhood—the account of the squire, the parson, the stories of village life, which are always more singular and often affecting than any novelist's fancy could conceive.

The next day being Sunday, he continued his writing, deferring his visit to the church till the following week, as he could remain uninterrupted whilst the farmer and his wife were away there. In the afternoon he took a stroll across the plain along the side of the Slumbercumb brook, and saw the bare green downs around lying solitary in the pale sunshine of March, and wondered how he was to get through his time in that obscure region till his friend Sterland should summon him away. Suddenly it occurred to him that he should be engaged in his new duties on the morrow; that his letters could not get posted

till the evening, and he hastened back to the farm, and went off with them at once to the town.

On Monday morning, after breakfast, the farmer accompanied him to the school-house. It had assumed a much more comfortable aspect. The walls had been washed, the floor mended, a fire was burning within the rusty bars, and a dozen rough boys and girls were assembled about the door with their tattered books and slates. The farmer had sent a comfortable rush-bottomed chair for the master, which was set by his little desk near the fire. And so commenced Philip Stanton's duties as a country pedagogue, very different, indeed, from those he had exercised at Craythorne or in London. To examine the whereabouts of his rustic pupils in their thumbed and dog-eared spelling-book by the illustrious Fenning, interspersed with fables and moral stories, with old wood-cuts surrounded by an oval ring; the lion in the net and the mouse nibbling him

loose, the countryman and his stalled waggon, and Jupiter listening to his prayers on a cloud; Jones and Brown and Robinson going to bathe without leave, and Robinson getting drowned. To hear them spell out words of two syllables and stick fast at them, and read in a loud whining tone about the priest who would not give the wag even a farthing, but was liberal of his blessings; and of the man who, having tried the effect of throwing grass and dirt at the boys in his apple-tree, determined to try what virtue there was in stones; to set sums in numeration and addition, and hear the young hobnails plunge and stumble about in the multiplication-table, and see them wipe their noses on their already shining sleeves, and to endeavour to keep silence by slapping his desk with his cane; to detect, ever and anon, some embryo mimic making lunies and grimaces at him behind his back; and to breathe the polluted air of this temple of science, where scrawling pothooks and fish-

hooks gave promise at some distant period of achieving the time-honoured copy of "Delays are dangerous!" What a martyrdom for the son of Hugh Meynell, accomplished in all the learning of Greece, Rome, and Arabia!

One day, as he was lightening these crucifying duties by the perusal of the history of the Jews by Josephus, which he had found on the farmer's shelf, a young man walked in, and nodded with a good-humoured smile at him, taking a seat on the bench at the end of the desk near the fire, and said:—

"So, are you the new master?"

"Even so," said Philip.

The young man smiled again, and said:—

"I am afraid, from your appearance, we may not hope to keep you long, however."

"I don't count on that," said Philip. "I am only *locum-tenens* till a more suitable man is found."

"Poor wretch!" said the young man,

"whoe'er and where'er he may be, who has only as much learning as he can afford for twelve pounds a-year. Have you, sir, discovered how to live on five shillings a-week, paying out of it half-a-crown for a death's-head lodging?"

"I lodge well," said Philip, "and board well, at ten shillings a-week, and sacrifice five of it patriotically to my country."

"That will do," said the young man; "I see you are all right." He looked round on the scholars and on the room. "Well," said he, "they must have furbished the old Noah's ark up amazingly in a day or two; why, I have never seen a window or door open here these five months."

This easy-spoken young man appeared to be two or three and twenty; he had a pleasant good-natured face, fair, with blue smiling eyes, with a ray of humour in them, brown hair and whiskers; stood about middle size, and was dressed in a loose morning coat, a

striped kerseymere waistcoat, and grey trousers. A pale blue silk handkerchief was tied round his neck with an easy bow, and altogether he looked a young gentleman farmer, but of an intelligent and pleasant stamp.

"Are you farming hereabout?" asked Philip.

"Yes," said the young man. "At Waterdale. You must come and see my farm. I have a considerable quantity of stock on it, though whether I shall bring them to a good market is not so clear. Some are old and tough; some are Pharaoh's lean kine; some are young and apt to break the fences; and as for my tillage, that's not to boast of."

Philip smiled.

"I think your farm and mine are pretty much on a par, only that I have none of the old tough ones."

"You'll find the young ones tough enough —and, as for the old ones outside, they'll find out how to bother you."

"What crops do you grow, then?" asked Philip. "Are they as promising as the stock?"

"Oh!" said he, "my farm lies in the Purple Island. The furrows I plough, I fear, are like those which the vessel ploughs in the sea, which close pretty fast after it. But the wheat I sow is older than that picked out of Egyptian mummy cases, and has ten times the vitality in it. As for the weeds I root up, they are the same old tares that 'the enemy the devil' sowed ages ago; in short," said he, "I am the curate of Waterdale."

"I was fast coming to that conclusion," said Philip; "though you don't look very clerical."

"If you had been at church on Sunday, I should have suited you," said the curate. "But what's the use of going about amongst the clodhoppers here like a rook or a raven? They hate the colour

of such birds. But are you in orders?"

"No," said Philip, "but I am the son of a clergyman."

"What name?" asked the young man.

"Stanton."

"A good name. I once heard a curate of that name, Hugh Stanton, préach at Mansfield. Heavens! how he made my blood warm and run! I thought we had got a new Barrow or a Taylor; but he did not suit there, and I've not seen his fellow since. I could almost fancy that you are like him."

"He was my father," said Philip.

"Was!" said the young man, and seized Philip's hand; "was! *Troja fuit!* But it is something to have had such a father; and so let us be friends—such things are scarce here."

Philip returned the young man's cordial pressure of the hand, and from that hour they *were* friends. Lawrence Hyde, the curate of Waterdale, was a first-class prize for Philip in that place. He invited him to walk over and

take tea with him after the school closed—and of course Philip did so. He found him in a neat cottage near the church, with a good large garden, in which the curate worked more or less daily himself. A woman in the next cottage cooked and cared for him, and there he had his books, and looked as comfortable as possible. The fire glowed and flickered on the whitewashed walls; his tea-table was covered with a snowy cloth, and supplied with excellent cream and delicious white cakes; and the cheerful, pleasant face of the young man was of itself enough to send all gloomy thoughts outside into the dark night. He soon let Philip into much knowledge of the people round.

"The farmers," he said, "are generally as mere clods as those they walk over. To make money and to drive a hard bargain are their great enjoyments. They know nothing beyond their own life—read nothing but the Tory papers, and that chiefly to find out the

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price of corn and stock. Your friend Stulp is the best of them; he has a considerable glimmering of better things, and is a hearty cock to boot. As for the peasants, they are as poor — ay, poorer than even Job was when he was seated on the dunghill, and his best crockery was not a pot, but a potsherd. I'll show you one of these days what sties they pig in—altogether, men, women and children; their wages are but about six shillings a-week in the summer, and they are often three or four months out of work in the winter, so you may imagine their poverty and their depravity."

"But don't the farmers see all this?" asked Philip; "they seem pretty well off."

"See it! they do," said the curate; "but they have seen it all their lives, and it is as much a matter of course to them as that corn should grow, and the rivulet should run. They are obliged to pay high poor-rates in winter; but then, in their wisdom, they think they get them back out of the low wages in

summer. But," he added, "look around amongst the cottages—you can always have an errand to talk about their children at the school, and then you'll see a sight!"

Philip was greatly delighted with what he saw of this young man. He found on his shelves books which he could solace himself with till his own arrived; and it was his great luxury to run down the valley after school and take tea with Lawrence, and the curate would every now and then look in at the school, take a stroll with Philip across the plain after dinner, or turn in and breakfast with him at the farmer's—for the hearty John Stulp and his wife were always glad to see him.

"There's such a cheeriness about the lad," he would say; "he's a real good 'un, he is—and he knows all about farming as well as the oldest on us."

But Wednesday had come, and Saturday again, and no letters. Philip was almost desperate.

"Can they have forgotten me?" he said; "or is that wily Canon stopping our correspondence?"

The most gloomy fancies began to seize on him. He felt inclined to brush off without ceremony, and go straight to Dorking to learn the real facts. He consulted Lawrence Hyde. "Had he found any such difficulty in getting letters?"

"By no means," he replied; "there must be some mystery about that. The carrier was a punctual fellow enough; and as Philip had been to the town himself, it was very strange. But he advised patience for a little while; there might be some little cause that would pass off—all might be explained."

Philip tried to endure it, and waited. He questioned the carrier, enjoined him to be particular in asking for letters for him, till the carrier began to be angry too. He said the schoolmaster should have taught

his friends to write before he left home. Maybe they had forgotten how to spell his name; and he cracked his whip, jee-whoed, and drove off. The following Saturday, however, he lugged out one letter, saying, in his country wit, "Well, schoolmaster, there's some on 'em can write, I see."

Philip tore open the letter; it was from Jeremiah Sterland. It said:—

"Philip, son of Hugh, hold on! Thou art, I know, like a pelican in the wilderness at Slumbercumb; but hold on! all will be well. I am hunting fish for the pelican's pouch. My nets are cast, and I expect a speedy haul. Patience a little longer says thine in verity,—JEREMIAH STERLAND."

The letter was written from his own house in Queen's-square, Westminster. Not a word of affairs at Craythorne, not even of Mrs. Rudd. It might not be very reasonable to expect anything but the matter in hand from so busy and laconic a personage as Jeremiah

Sterland, and yet in the state of Philip's mind there was a strong feeling that there might have been a word or so; there was a painful blank or vacuum. He folded the letter, and felt strangely forgotten, cut off, abandoned.

A few days afterwards brought his trunk from Mrs. Rudd, but that was locked; he himself had the key, and it could contain nothing from her; and yet he felt as if it ought, and might. Men in a mood like Philip's, stretched on the tenter-hook of wild suspense, are not very reasonable. As he stood looking on the trunk, after he had opened it, and turned everything over, as if by some mysterious means a letter might have got into it, he suddenly thought that the direction-card looked thick; he clutched it with a desperate hand—there was something under it, he forced the tacks with his knife, and found a small paper placed at the back of the card. It was written in staggering hieroglyphics:—

"God bless you, Mr. Philip. Hopes to hare from yer. Hall Well at th' manner. Mr. Sharls dgoind 'is ridgment. In hast,—AMY RUDD."

That was the first atom of news that he had heard from Craythorne. All well there, and yet not a word from them! How well?—how could they be all well, and yet not a word? Charles has gone to his regiment. When? Where? And to go without a word! The thoughts which crowded upon him were too painful to bear. Had that artful Canon persuaded them of their folly in their friendship for him? Could they so soon be reconciled to give him up? He could not believe it. There was some foul play, and the detested Canon was at the bottom of it. He thought to himself that he might have known that, after his encounter with him in the Park, he would be only the more determined and persevering in his malice. But his thoughts were more than he could bear; he deter-

mined to know the worst. He rushed away to Waterdale; told Lawrence Hyde of his certainty that treachery was in play against him, and that he must, come what would, away for a few days to discover the truth. Lawrence generously proffered to take his place in the school for a few days; and that afternoon he was on the way, with nothing but what he carried on his person, and money for his expenditure. We need not follow his course, it was hurried and unresting. He crossed the country to the great mail road. The next day he was at Guildford, and the same evening he was at Mrs. Rudd's door in Dorking. The reader may picture the good woman's astonishment, as once more, precisely as her husband and herself were sitting at supper at the little round deal table, the fire burning brightly, the cat sleeping in the hollow, leather-bottomed chair, the cricket singing in the wall, Philip Stanton stood pale, haggard, ghost-like on the floor.

"Now, Heaven defend us!" almost shrieked the poor woman, as she saw him. "What evil betides us this time?"

"That," said Philip, "I am come to hear, mother. Except your few lines, I have not heard a word from Craythorne, though I have written four or five times, praying earnestly for a line, a syllable—and directing, as requested, to the care of Mother Garnett, on Crackenthorpe Green. What is it all?" demanded Philip, with a pale eager visage, that made the poor woman actually fear for his wits. "What can you tell me, mother? What do you know?"

"Sit down, Mr. Philip, sit down, and I'll tell you all I know, and that's little. Mr. Charles, as I said, is gone to his regiment in Ireland. He came in here the day before he went, and was almost as wild as you, Philip, because nothing had been heard from you—and yet they had written, and written, and written."

"I thought as much!" said Philip, with a

groan. "That devil, blacker than Satan himself!—it is his work. But I must see Paulina, Mrs. Rudd—I must see the ladies, if it costs my life."

Mrs. Rudd shook her head.

"The ladies, too, are away. Them, the father, mother, and all are away—God knows where! Nobody here does. Everybody is full of wonder why; but we can guess; it's the Canon's doing—oh! he's a deep, deep, deep 'un!"

Philip turned and strode hastily through the apartment. His eye was fixed on space, or on the opposite wall; his teeth were clenched, his lips were compressed till they were more livid than his face. He strode rapidly to and fro, and deep groans seemed to issue from the very bottom of his chest."

"Philip, Philip! for Heaven's sake, calm yourself!—listen, or you'll go mad!" cried Mrs. Rudd. "And after all, it's not so bad!"

That word stopped him in a moment.

"Not so bad? How not so bad? Are they not all gone—out of reach—out of reach of word or line, and in the hands of that fiend incarnate?"

"Ay!" said the shrewd old dame; "but what of that? They would not be gone if they were not still your friends? They are true as steel, or they would not be rapt away, like Elijah in a fiery chariot. Charles was as much put out as you. 'Mrs. Rudd,' he said, 'the devil's abroad, but we'll beat him yet. Tell Philip, if you can get a letter to him, that we are not a bit changed, nor likely to change, and I'll find a way yet to reach him. For I know,' he said, 'he has not forgotten me, nor neglected to write, but it's that crafty, meddling Hargrave.'"

"Mother! mother!" said Philip, "these are the best words I've heard yet. That's news, glorious news!—worth coming all the way to hear. Yes, yes; we will find a way to defeat the villain yet. But what of Sterland? Any news?"

"He's gone too!"

"Gone too!—Sterland gone!" exclaimed Philip, more astonished than ever. "Nay, they cannot have whisked him away. That is too ridiculous."

"But he's gone though," said Mrs. Rudd. "He's been sent off in all haste to India. There was a ship sent on purpose with him. There's something going wrong out there with those Pindries or Ratters, and he's sent for to help. He's always wanted at a pinch; and when all the great generals and governors are set fast, it's Mr. Sterland, only Mr. Sterland, as can set all right again."

"Then my good luck's gone with him," said Philip, sighing deeply, and seating himself with a visage of despair. "But one prop, and that knocked clear away! That was always the fate of my poor father, and it is mine!"

It was in vain that Mrs. Rudd endeavoured to cheer him, and to protest that Mr. Sterland would never forget what he had promised.

"Maybe he has put something in train before he went," she said. "No, he's not the man to forget his word."

Philip suddenly started up.

"Mother," he said, "there's a coach from Portsmouth passes here at eleven o'clock for London. I will go with it. I must see somebody at Mr. Sterland's. I must learn something more precise!"

"Mrs. Rudd could not persuade him to wait till morning, but she prevailed upon him to get some supper, and they sat up and talked till Philip seemed calmer. The great corner-stone of comfort was, that all was right as far as Paulina, and Charles, and Helen were concerned. At length the horses of the coach were heard. Philip, wrapped in an old drab coat of the sexton's, mounted its roof at the door, and once more was on his way.

It was about three o'clock, of a cold, sharp morning, as he reached the White Horse Cellar, in Piccadilly; and, entering

the inn, got some cold meat and hot punch, and threw himself on a sofa till it was time to find anyone up in London. He then breakfasted, and set off for Queen's Square. There he learned that Mr. Sterland's secretary would be at the house at ten o'clock—till then, there was nobody but a housemaid. Philip asked where he could find the secretary. The maid said it was somewhere in Blackfriars—she could not tell exactly where; so Philip walked about — went round the Abbey, crossed to the corner of Westminster Bridge, up Parliament Street, walked hurriedly and impatiently round St. James's Park, and, as the clock of the Abbey struck ten, was on the steps of Jeremiah Sterland's house again. There he met a spare, grave, clerk-looking man of forty, who was about to enter by applying a latch-key. It was Mr. Corbyn, the secretary, who desired Philip to walk in; showed him into a room fitted up with desks and partitions like an office, and asked what

he could do for him. Philip stated his case; at which the secretary said, in his quiet way, there must be something wrong somewhere; that he knew Mr. Sterland took great interest in Mr. Stanton's business, and had been in Downing Street several times about it. "And I know," added Mr. Corbyn, "that he wrote to you, for I posted the letter a week ago. He said he had done well for you, and wondered that he did not hear from you in acknowledgment. And then came the summons for India, and he must away."

Philip's astonishment and consternation deprived him for some time of utterance. "Is this man's power so unbounded?" he thought. "Can he cut away my letters out of any quarter? By what means?" He was utterly confounded. He told the secretary that he had reason to believe that this letter of Mr. Sterland's had been stopped somewhere, for he knew that this had been the case lately with letters from other friends. Mr. Corbyn

expressed much surprise, and said he would make a rigid inquiry into the matter; he would apply to the Postmaster-General, and Philip should know the result. He would also write to Mr. Sterland at Nerbudda, where he expected he would be with the camp, and ask for particulars of what he had done. Philip thanked him, asked him to write to him under cover to the Rev. Lawrence Hyde, Waterdale; and, expressing his warmest thanks for Mr. Corbyn's friendly interest, he once more directed his course towards Slumbercumb; and the very next day, by coach and on foot, he was again there.

CHAPTER III.

Tired out as Philip was by his rapid journey, and the feelings that had torn and agitated him, he set off directly to Waterdale to consult Lawrence Hyde on the difficulties of his case. He laid the whole story before him without reserve, that he might be the better able to assist him in devising a remedy. When he had heard the whole, the curate pronounced it a most extraordinary affair—and, on the part of the Canon, a most audacious and hazardous one.

"It was clear," he observed, "that he was a man of no mean capacity for intrigue, and

of a spirit as daring as it was malicious. The interruption of the post, if discovered, must bring infamy and ruin upon him; but how to detect this?—the letters at the Craythorne end might possibly never reach the post-office. A traitorous and highly-feed servant might manage their abstraction there; but here he did not believe that the Canon had anything to do with it — it must occur in the post-office; and then came the question, Where? That would be hard to trace. Letters had not all their addresses taken down at the office,* and nothing but a most determined inquiry on the part of Government would come at the defaulter, and perhaps not even that.

The curate said he would go to the market-town with Philip, and they would plainly state that letters were missing, and that an inquiry was on foot. That would at least

* At that day the system of registering letters unfortunately did not exist, or the mystery would soon have been reached.

alarm the postmaster if he were guilty, and they might be possibly able to form an idea by the expression of his countenance. If they could not sift the past, they might give more security to the future, if the mischief lay here; but who could say where it was? That it was paid for in proportion to the risk, there could be no doubt. The Canon, of course, could command adequate means of bribery from Sir Huldicote, without any sacrifice himself. Every exertion must be used to discover the culprit. They would hope for something satisfactory from Mr. Corbyn's inquiry in London.

It was not till late in the night that the two friends finished their discussion, and Philip did not return to Slumbercumb till the school-hour in the morning; for he had not shown himself the evening before at farmer Stulp's. He now returned to his humble duties with a heavy heart, but with a willingness to remain at his post till some light could be introduced

into his affairs. For where, indeed, could he go? Sterland was away, and it must be many months, not less than nine at that day, ere any reply could be heard from India. What might result from Mr. Corbyn's inquiries he awaited with impatience.

And here we may inform the reader that not less had been the pain, the surprise, the suspense at Craythorne. There, no doubt of Philip's truth or endeavour to communicate with them existed. It was felt that there was a plan in operation to defeat all correspondence, and that it was in the hands of a master. Letters were posted at Dorking, at Reigate, in Croydon, and in London, and the result was the same—there came no reply, and therefore they felt convinced that none of theirs reached. The distress of Paulina's mind was beyond description, from the reflection of what Philip must think of them if he, like them, received no letters. Charles resolved, at all hazards, to mount and ride direct for

Slumbercumb; but as if the invisible enemy were at once aware of it, he received orders to join his regiment in Derry, and to be in Liverpool for the packet by such a time, that he could only just accomplish it. Tom Gossett accompanied him to London, and there Charles declared that it did not signify, run down by the mail to Slumbercumb he must, and see how things were. He could come up in the night, and so, if he did not catch the packet at Liverpool, he could take the next vessel and plead that he had made all possible speed, but in vain. But Tom Gossett, with a very serious face, advised him not to think of such a thing. To fail in punctuality in joining his company on the very first occasion might affect his prospects for life. He entreated him, as he valued his own happiness and that of his family, not to do so for the world. He said that he could find a man who would take a letter down; he would answer for him, if it was a case of life and death. There was Bill Conning, an

ostler at the Blue Posts, in Holborn—he had known him for years, and he was as honest a fellow as any in London. And as for that, if Mr. Charles would offer him a good sum to go down, and leave another sum in his (Tom's) hands, to be had on his return with a receipt for the letter, that would make all as sure as screw and glue.

Charles had great faith in Tom Gossett, more was the pity. This Bill Conning was sent for, and Charles offered him 5*l.* to go with a letter to Slumbercumb, and another 5*l.* to be deposited in Gossett's hands, and called for at Craythorne in coming back. Conning, of course, engaged to do the job; and Charles, thinking this must succeed, wrote the letter, gave one 5*l.* to Conning and one to Gossett, and took the mail for Liverpool, in the pleasing confidence that at last he had out-manœuvred the Canon. No sooner was he, however, in the mail, than Conning handed the letter to Gossett, and

kept his 5*l.* without any journey to Slumbercumb; and months afterwards, when Gossett met Charles in Dublin, and he asked why he had never presented to him the receipt for the letter, he shook his head, and said, "He was afraid the rascal Conning had deceived him, for he had never called for the other 5*l.*, and since then he had heard a very poor account of him." Gossett took the note from his pocket-book, and returned it to Charles, with such an air of concern that Charles never suspected his sincerity.

It was now advancing into April. Signs of spring were spreading all around Slumbercumb. The plain, on the edge of which the hamlet stood, grew beautifully green. The hedges were budding—the thrushes and blackbirds were heard in the dingles and hedge-rows. The violets spread in purple and white clouds under the sheltered banks and fences, bathed in fragrant dews, and the purple orchis studded the tender grass with its beauty.

Philip found his friend Lawrence often stripped, and warm with digging and planting in his garden. He showed his early cabbages, his springing peas and beans, his beds of potatoes just peeping, with a gardener's pride. He had his hot-bed, and plants of cucumbers and melons, in great forwardness, and produced fresh radishes and cress on his tea-table. As the days grew fine and clear, he would engage Philip for a long stroll on his holiday afternoons—Wednesday and Saturday—up into the downs, the turf of which was soft as velvet, and whence they obtained extensive views into the country round; or they strolled to some adjacent village, and drank tea in some village inn, and conversed with the landlord on the condition and views of the neighbourhood. But nothing could disperse the gloom and anxiety from Philip's mind. The ortolan flitted before them on the downs, showing its white back, and the cuckoo shouted his deep monotone in the willowy

dell—but they only reminded him of seeing and hearing them on Box-hill and around Craythorne, in happier times. No light could be thrown on the mystery of the stoppage of the letters. Mr. Corbyn had had a long correspondence with the General Post Office, in which long protocols and letters had been received from the authorities, setting forth sundry inquiries made in different quarters, but without result.

Lawrence Hyde shook his head, and looked additionally grave over the affair.

"Either," he said, "the Canon manages his matters with a skill worthy of a first-rate diplomatist, and spends a sum on his agents which secures their utmost zeal and adroitness in his service, or there is more in this than we have imagined."

"What more can there be?" asked Philip.

"Why," replied Lawrence, "you are, no doubt, aware that the country is in a very

uneasy state. The manufacturing districts are in great distress. There is a fearful deficiency of trade—thousands are out of work. The corn-law adds awfully to the miseries of the people; and Government not only refuses to repeal, or even modify it, but to listen to any demands for reform of parliament, without which the people expect no permanent relief. In the country, the very agriculturists' labourers suffer not the less. They buy the very corn they raise, as it were, out of the fire. They get no meat, but little bread, and they have nothing to buy clothes, or even blankets with, much less fuel for the winter. Instead of using the only means to ward off famine and insurrection, by opening the ports, the Government is determined to crush all complaints by the bayonet. In such a state of things, they are suspicious of every one who sympathizes with the people, and it is shrewdly suspected that such persons are not only closely watched, but their

correspondence intercepted and examined."

"But why should they examine mine?" asked Philip. "I have had no connection with politics, and they would find nothing of the kind in my letters."

"Granted," said Lawrence; "but your father was a man of very prominent and undisguised opinions regarding the treatment of the poor; and nothing could be easier than for an enemy to cast a suspicion on his son—and if his real letters contained nothing tending to bear out this suspicion, it were easy to write something in his name, having his hand to imitate."

"But now, however," said Philip, "you are imagining an enemy very mean and monstrous indeed!"

"I am only imagining a man," replied Lawrence, "who is mean and despicable enough to intercept private letters. I don't say it is so; but it would not surprise me at all if it were."

Philip confessed that these were all new ideas to him; and as to the state of the country, he had been so much absorbed by his own concerns since leaving Craythorne, that he had not thought that there were thousands all around him suffering still more sharply than himself. He was awakened as out of a dream, and astounded at this revelation.

"But how long can this have been?" he asked. "All was declared as most flourishing in the country whilst I was at Craythorne."

Lawrence smiled.

"I daresay to you it seemed so. There was no want there. You lived in the enchanted castle of protection. Bread, and meat, and milk, and wine did not fail there. You slept on soft beds, and listened to the delicious notes of the ladies' piano and seraph voices; but beyond the circle of that Elysium lay even then a Hades of wretchedness which would have terrified you to have discovered. Poverty?—nay, not poverty, but absolute

starvation. Thousands and tens of thousands of stout fellows, capable of any amount of labour, 'asking leave to toil,' and asking in vain. In the dense manufacturing towns, the once wealthy spinners shaking in terror of their coming ruin, in their counting-houses, and amid their lofty piles of buildings; and in long streets of little houses, the workless, breadless people, amid their half-clad and starving families, growing desperate as hunted lions. Even here, have you yet looked into any of these cottages? You saw the fare of the Spodes; you may see scores of others of the labourers who have no food but perhaps a few potatoes, or even a few parched peas or boiled beans. How can they buy flour at seven shillings a stone, and their week's wages only six shillings?"

Philip listened in wonder and dismay.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed, "can this be true? Can such things exist in this great and opulent England?"

"Convince yourself," replied Lawrence—"come here a moment." And rising, he led Philip into the first cottage at hand. There sat a woman looking the picture of famine and despair. About her sat three or four children, who were eagerly watching a black pot on the fire. They were ragged, pale, sickly-looking, and dirty.

"Good morrow, Mrs. Harper," said Lawrence. "Has Harper got work? It is time now for all sorts of spring work."

"Yes, he has work enough," said the woman, sullenly.

"I'm very glad to hear it," replied Lawrence, "so now you will be more comfortable."

"The work Tom has got," continued the woman, "is beating oakum at the House of Correction."

"What!" said Lawrence.

"Nay, sir, you need na wonder so much. We had had neither bit nor sup for a fort-

night. What little wages Tom got had to go to pay off th' winter score at th' shop, and so he tried th' old game of snickling a hare."

"And was caught?" said the curate.

"That's it," said the woman; "and now I've two shillings a-week from the parish, and it'ull buy just two pounds of flour for six on us for a week."

"The Lord have mercy!" said Lawrence, with deep feeling; "what *can* you do?"

"Why, I've gathered a few young nettles," said the woman, "and I'm boiling them, and the childer are ravenous for them, and are pulling me to pieces, crying 'they are done enough, mam—they are done enough.'"

Lawrence ran out of the house, and fetched a loaf of bread from his own cottage. He seized a knife, and began cutting it up and giving it to the children and to the woman. Philip stood rooted in astonishment to see the voracity with which they tore and devoured it,

being in great danger of choking themselves in their eagerness.

"Will you go any further, Stanton?" he said to Philip, as they left the house.

"For Heaven's sake, no," exclaimed Philip; "what have I been about to live in the midst of such scenes as these and know nothing of them? It is cruel, selfish, monstrously wicked! But something must be done. We must rouse the farmers, the gentry. The people must not starve; it would bring the curse of God upon us. I have a few pounds, but what will that do?"

"Something, but not much even in this hamlet," said Lawrence. "They have every shilling of mine but what is absolutely necessary for existence; and as for a coat, I have not had one these two years. But as for what you or I could do, it is just like attempting to fill the ocean bed with a drop of dew—to quench the fires of burning ricks which blaze nightly in many a country place with the

dregs of your tea-cup. Why, sir, the misery is universal amongst the people. It is one large, enormous, devouring, annihilating misery, which nothing but a national remedy can cure, for it is a national evil. Corn, sir, corn cheap, plentiful, poured in from all sides, from lands and ports where it is rotting—and work, sir, work, for wheel and shuttle, for spindle, and pick and spade, in field and town, in colliery and foundry, in spinning-mills and weavers' looms and stocking-frames—for all the brave hearts and hands that would labour to the death for their wives and children rather than see them suffer a single pang, and yet cannot get it—that is the only effective remedy, and that remedy is denied. That, Philip Stanton, is the great gaunt fact of the time; that is the condition of this England which has fought and conquered the world, and now starves the stout hearts that achieved the victory. That is the calamity, wide as the length and breadth of

the island; and how, then, shall you or I grapple with it?"

"But the picture you draw," said Philip, in a strange state of wondering terror, "is appalling beyond conception. It is a crime, a blasphemy, to sit still in the midst of it. Everyone should do his utmost to put an end to such a frightful state of things."

"Can two midges," said Lawrence, "put out a flaming cottage? They would perish in it, and no one be the wiser or the better. God only knows how to find a remedy—and he will do, as sure as he is a God."

"But that does not satisfy me," said Philip; "I feel myself a culprit, a base and selfish monster, so long as I continue to even eat and drink amid such misery and destitution."

"We'll think of that," said Lawrence. "I have already thought much of it, and I will tell you my thoughts by degrees. Enough for this moment that there are numbers of men,

older, more experienced than we—men of wealth and power, men in parliament and the peerage, and at the press—that are daily labouring to that end; and though I agree with you that every man should do all he can, it is first necessary to see what we really can do, or we may only act the midges, and consume ourselves, and leave the fire all the same. There are perils for all those who stand forth to demand a remedy. The Government is strong, backed up with a large army accustomed to shed blood on the Continent; the Government is strong, jealous, arbitrary, and alive at all points to put down every attempt at change; and if you and I went out to-day, and called on the people to rise and help themselves, we should to-morrow, like numbers already, be clapped up in prison—and then, God help us and the people too!"

"I see reason in what you say," Philip replied; "but how is it that, whilst you

knew all this, you have said nothing to me, and could seem so cheerful and unconcerned?"

"Because," said the curate, "I have seen something more or less of distress amongst the people from a lad. I was born in a district where much distress occurs ever and anon amongst the people, but never till now so horrible. I have chosen my task, which is to enlighten and comfort the people spiritually; and I have not yet seen my way into any thing further, so as to insure good that way, without ruining my chance of doing good this way. But come, I see you are suddenly come upon a new and vast field of knowledge, and bitter knowledge too. Be patient till you have looked a little more about you, and see how the land really lies. Meantime, put these papers into your pocket," taking some from his desk; "keep them carefully to yourself, or you will be immediately pronounced a Jacobin and incendiary."

Philip began to open them, eager to learn more of this new and woful subject; but Lawrence said:—

"Put them up! put them up! and don't read them till you are in your own room; and whilst we take our tea I will tell you a little of my own history, and then you will comprehend better why I move with some caution.

"I am," continued Lawrence Hyde, as he poured out tea, "a clergyman, as you see; but I am a clerk without connections, without patronage, without any prospect but that of plodding along in some obscure district like this to the end of the chapter. You may think my position not very encouraging, and I have long thought myself that I have mistaken, if not my vocation, at least the particular field of life that I have entered. I am of the people, not of the aristocracy; and, therefore, seem out of place in the church of the aristocracy. I ought to have been in that

of the people, the church, or, as he will have it, the province of the church, of John Wesley. Wherefore, you may see anon.

"My father was, and still is, a little farmer at Wood-Bettony in Nottinghamshire, not many miles from Mansfield. As a lad I was often sent to the rectory with mushrooms and truffles, which I gathered in the fields and woods. The rectory was a large old rambling house, in a large old garden surrounded by lofty old walls, on which there were in autumn loads of apricots, plums, and peaches, ; and in the gardens themselves, fine old mulberry, and quince, and medlar trees, which excited my admiration. To the rectory belonged a considerable farm, and a great stable and barn-yard adjoined it. I used to go into the kitchen, which seemed to me as big as the one at Hardwicke old hall, the house of the Duke of Devonshire, that I had once been in, and the grey lofty towers of which I had often seen in my rambles. I used

to see the farming men and women servants at their dinners, eating out of pewter plates, and with huge joints of roast beef and roast pork before them, in huge dishes also of pewter. They had great horns of strong ale, and it seemed to me that no lords could live better than the rector's hinds. The rector himself was a man noted for nothing but his red pimpled face, and for his fondness for his glass, not disdaining even to get tipsy at the village alehouse, as too many country clergymen did in his day. But his wife, who was a large, fair, round-faced lady, managed the affairs, and always made a point of maintaining the dignity of her husband. I shall not soon forget how she snubbed me once for saying simply Mr. Rowson, as we called the rector.

"'Rowson, boy!' she exclaimed, 'who are you talking of? The Reverend Mr. Rawlinson, you should say. Remember how you name the rector in future.'

"When I told my mother all the wonders

and the plenty that I saw at the parsonage, she would say—'Well, Lawrence, my boy, and why should not you be a parson as well as Mr. Rowson; he was only a farmer's son.' But my good mother, in her ambition for me, overlooked the trifling fact that Mr. Rawlinson had the good fortune to captivate in his youth, and when, I believe, he was a very comely and agreeable fellow, the daughter of a great landowner who had this living in his gift. My mother came at length to think that I ought to be a parson; and, though my father pished at the idea, I was at length sent to my aunt's at Mansfield, whose husband had a freestone quarry there, and I became a scholar at the grammar-school. Here I made such progress with Latin and Greek, that Mr. Goodacre, the master, quite fell into my mother's idea—said it was a shame such abilities should be lost at the plough-tail; and so, by the influence of the Duke of Portland, I became a sizar at Cam-

bridge—and here I am! But before I came hither, I served for a year in a curacy at Nottingham, was some months in the stocking-making, half village, half town of Sutton-in-Ashfield, and saw enough of the hard, joyless life of the struggling stockingers, as they are called, to inure me sufficiently to the aspect of popular suffering to give me more patience or indifference than I see you have. Well, read what I have given you, and we'll talk further."

CHAPTER IV.

When Philip had reached home, and shut himself up in his chamber, he opened the pamphlets which Lawrence had lent him. They turned out to be weekly numbers of Cobbett's "Register." The first discovery of this fact rather took Philip aback. He had always heard Cobbett described at Craythorne as a dreadful radical and incendiary, who was turning the heads of the people and inciting them to sedition. That he hated the Church, hated the aristocracy, hated the whole Government, abused all authorities and constituted powers with the foulest and most blasphemous epithets, and, if he were not stopped,

would make another French revolution in England, and rouse the lowest and most desperate of the population to plunder the houses and estates of the gentry, dishonour their wives and daughters, and overwhelm the grand old England with anarchy and atheism. Yet, Lawrence Hyde, who was neither an anarchist nor an atheist, read these "Registers," and recommended him to read them. There must be a reason for it; and when Philip recalled the scene which he had just witnessed, and which Lawrence assured him was but one frightful specimen of the whole rural population—when he recollected what he told him of the terrible state of the manufacturing districts, and that this condition was beheld with apathy by the landowners and the Government, that, instead of relieving the crushing misery of the people, they refused to relax the great famine-law, or to listen to the cries for reform—he was drawn by an irresistible impulse, not of mere curiosity, but of

human sympathy, to look into those proscribed and denounced pages.

He was not long in meeting with fierce and savage language. Terms of ire and indignation were hurled, like burning bolts and flaming bars of iron from some great smithy, against what were termed the despots and destroyers of the country, murderers of the people, vampires of the life-blood of the nation. There were whole hail-storms of denunciation. Tyrants, blood-suckers, tramplers on the laws and constitution, by hireling legions, by steel and gunpowder, by spies and borough-mongering majorities in parliament; borough-mongers, rotten representatives of rotten boroughs, representatives of the pig-sties of Gatton, and the earth-heap and stones of Old Sarum, sellers of themselves for bribery, tools of corruption, Tory squires, Tory parsons, parson-justices, and just-asses, with their starvation corn-laws and their game-law, riding down the people with their bull-headed

yeomanry, their bread-and-cheese "tenters," and the like phrases, ran through the whole composition, with a daring, startling, unstinted vehemence that seemed for a time to justify all that he had heard of the lawless and irreverent intemperance of this man. But soon he came to direct and forcible details of debates in parliament, and deeds of injustice in town, in country, in justice-rooms and sessions, which made the blood boil in the reader's veins, and gave the semblance of a fearful truth to the most ferocious terms that the writer used. The very judges on the bench were boldly accused of twisting the laws, of dishonouring their sacred and independent seat, to serve the purposes of the ruling oppressors, and adjudging exile and imprisonment to men who clearly only strove to restore to their country its old inheritance of liberty and abundance. The ministers of the time, Castlereagh, Liverpool, Sidmouth, Vansittart, were here not represented, as in the

old Tory prints that Philip had read at Craythorne, as the glorious pilots who had weathered the storm, who had encountered and put down the tyrant of the world—but as base, un-English men, who had banded with the despots of the Continent to defraud the nations of their liberties, and to rivet on them again all the chains and dogmas of political slavery—to replant the Papal superstitions, under which they had groaned for ages, and against which they had rebelled in blood and fury, destroying thrones, bastilles, and imbecile tyrants in their rage. Yet these men—these Englishmen—had spent the best blood of England, and hundreds of millions of England's coin, to reinstate the old father of all superstitions and doctrines of tyranny —the Pope—to set up once more the ancient and incurable and superannuation of Bourbon oppression on the throne of France—to rivet on Germany again the chains of ignominious slavery which it had rent, causing its legion

of craven and trembling rulers to raise their lumpish heads once more in insolent triumph, and giving new lease to the iron sway of half-savage Russia. These were the men who reared up whatever the righteous wrath of the nations had pulled down, and had given new life and security to the priests, the watch-dogs of tyranny—to the confessional, the peep-hole of clerical espionage into every house and every man's secret thoughts in Christendom — to the suppression of the Bible, and of every species of knowledge which has liberty and healing on its wings. These were the men who, cursed in their varied tongues, from Siberia to Cadiz, by the defrauded, defeated, and despairing millions of the Continent for their work of desolation there, were now preparing to trample down the liberties of England, to extinguish Magna Charta, to quash the Bill of Rights, and to reduce the Island of the Free by soldiery, spies, borough-mongers, and an

ignorant and hot-brained squirearchy, to the level of the ancient serfdom of the Continent.

This was a marvellously different picture, but the farther the reader went the more he found of appalling facts, which bore a strange family likeness to what he had recently got a glimpse of—starving artisans, thousands of men in manufacturing towns assembling to utter their complaints, and dispersed by mayors, constables, and even soldiers; cries for reform and representation, and stern refusal on the part of Government; the people frantic for bread, and answered only by reading of the riot act and mustering of troops; farmers and shopkeepers complaining of the ruinous weight of taxes and poor-rates, and the poor complaining still more of unappeased hunger. Amid the lurid gloom stood forward, it was true, a few men of rank and station—a Grey, a Holland, a Spencer, a Granville, a Devonshire, a Tierney, a Burdett, a Romilly, a Horner, and a Broug-

ham—justifying the outcries of the people, and calling for reform, relaxation of bloody laws, reduction of soldiery and taxation, abolition of corn-laws and game-laws, so that the people might eat bread, and labour in peace, and education, that they might be fitted to take their proper part in the management of national affairs.

What Cobbett then proclaimed in his sledge-hammer style, these men, with all the eloquence of a humane sympathy, and the wisdom of enlarged minds, expanded by education, by study of the law and rights of the nation, and of the principles of national economy, justified to the full. Without the insulting epithets, they yet declared the same monstrous facts; and the fiery-tongued "Register" appeared no longer in the light of a reckless or malicious agitator, but of a giant wrestling with a host of desperate and implacable foes, and dealing around him at the same moment cries and blows which re-

sounded to the very limits of the realm. These little sheets, soon after this period reduced to twopence in price, were dispersed by hundreds of thousands through every town and village, and to many a lonely hut on the wild sea-beach, and amid the remotest mountains. They were voraciously sought, clutched at, read, carried onwards, received and discussed in workshops and smoky parlours of public-houses, and at the corners of streets and village lanes, as the working-classes rested at their noon-hour, if they had work, and at all hours if they had none. The shepherd read them on his downs, and on the slopes of mountains; the sailor read them in the forecastle between watches, and on the top-mast as he kept his look-out. Everywhere the undaunted British heart of the man Cobbett, the unclipped, unadulterated Saxon of his language, the massive strength of his understanding, the trenchant blade of his sarcasm, ground on the rough grind-

stone of nature, and not smoothed on the oily hone of education, and the very crashing hammer-strokes of his abusive nomenclature, met with an eager, vivid response, and the echoes of his cheers from the capital were sent back by acclamations from the thousands of the smutty mouths of Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, from the vigorous lungs of the Walsal and Bilston colliers, and the starving merchant-seamen of many a languishing port, from the Broomielaw of Glasgow to the bay of pilchard-curing Penzance.

The effect of this new species of reading on Philip was something indescribable. It was like the breaking up of a frost on a great continental river—the Danube, the Rhine, the Dnieper, or the Elbe—when suddenly from the most profound calm the air is filled with strange groans, sharp creaks, loud crashes, bellowing thunders, and through the darkness of midnight the whole course of the

frozen rivers seem tossed into violent chaos—huge white and spectral masses of ice rearing and plunging in the air, dashing, struggling, and launching themselves one over another, like rampant lions foaming with fury. The whole population is out with lights and poles to push back the crystal destruction from their houses and vineyards, which threatens to sweep them away, mowing them from their ancient seats, as the mower sweeps the barley field before him. It was like the breaking of the spell in the sleeping palace, when man, and dog, and bird, and spider, and fly, all suddenly started from their slumbers, and began one busy whirr and hum of activity. Philip seemed to himself to have been sleeping on the roof of a powder-mill or a volcano. He had been lulled on the lap of an enchanted life, where all was sunshine, ease, luxury, and ignorance, believing itself wise. He was startled now into wakefulness, and he beheld what the Germans call the

night-side of nature. The few oppressing the many, the many ready to wreak vengeance on the few. This starvation, this injustice, this resistance to the commonest claims of humanity, could not go on long. There must be concessions, or there must be worse—blood. He was in a whirl of wild and feverish fancy, of struggling and conflicting sensations. All was new, and at the same time terrible. He threw himself on his bed, but could not sleep for a long time; and, when sleep came, it came with hideous dreams of gaunt famishing mobs, and trampling, swearing soldiery, treading down shrieking women and children, and of Liverpool and Castlereagh, on fiery horses, hounding on their myrmidons to still tread down, hew, and slay the flying multitudes. He was impatient the next day for the close of his school, to run down to Lawrence, and seek for some new light, some gleam of order in the chaos of his brain.

He found Lawrence calmly hoeing his peas, and preparing to stick down their supporting rods. He had put off his coat, warm with his work, and his blue eye laughed calmly as he shook Philip by the hand, as if no elements of disorder were at work in the land. They soon adjourned to the tea-table, and Philip took out the bundle of "Registers," and said:—

"Hyde, here you have been sleeping, I dare say, as sound as a child, and yet you have not only driven sleep from me, but you have almost driven me mad. What a pandemonium! What a cave of despair you have introduced me to!"

"I thought it would startle you," said Lawrence, continuing to scoop the proper number of spoonfuls of tea from the caddy, and drop them into the pot.

"Startled!—it has electrified me!" said Philip; "but I want to know how much of it is true, and what is to come of it."

"As to the truth," said Lawrence, "see here, in several local papers which I have got. What do they tell us? See here, long accounts of incendiary fires in Suffolk. The labourers and their wives have not the patience of the poor famishing people here. They are up, smashing the thrashing-machines, burning them in open daylight, and sacking the flour-mills. Here, again, at Bury and at Norwich, they are marching with banners emblazoned with the words, "Bread or blood!" Here, again, they are up in the Isle of Ely. The farmers have been ruined, in spite of the corn-law—sold up under executions for rent, and no new tenants found to take their farms. The labourers thrown out of work, and the parishes unable to feed them, they are marching out, and plundering butchers' and bakers' shops—sheep are roasting, potatoes and wheat boiling, in the open air. The public-houses are filled with rioters drinking the cellars dry. The magistrates'

houses are attacked. Littleport, on the river Lark, is in the hands of the hungry mobs; the frightened inhabitants are flying in terror, and troops are marching in. There must be blood and death there. And what is the news from Staffordshire and Warwickshire? The iron and coal trades at an absolute stand. All stagnation in business, all agitation in the minds of the people. Coal-pits have ceased to work, furnaces are blown out, factories are closed, and the famishing, exasperated colliers and iron-workers are dragging waggons of coals to London to show their misery, and demand cheap bread, eased taxation, and, as a consequence, revival of trade. And what are they doing in my own district? Destitute of work, General Ludd is abroad again; and believing that machinery is the cause of their suffering, his midnight legions are gutting cotton-mills, demolishing power-looms, and scattering their fragments on the high-roads. Compare this with what

was publicly stated in parliament not two months ago, that the poor in some districts have deserted their abodes. 'Whole parishes have been deserted,' said Mr. Brand, 'and the crowds of paupers increasing in numbers, as they went from parish to parish, spread wider and wider this awful desolation, discharged sailors and disbanded militiamen swelling their ranks. If they have gone to towns, there they encountered fresh battalions of the unemployed, and have been driven back by an opposing tide of destitution to the country.' Do you now believe in the fiery diatribes of William Cobbett?"

Philip snatched up the papers, and ran over these terrible accounts for some time in silence, then flinging them down—

"My God!" he exclaimed, "it is only too true! But what is to be the end of it? And how is it, Lawrence, that you take these horrors so coolly?"

"Because," said Lawrence, offering Philip

his cup, and pushing a plate of bread and butter towards him, "as I said before, to you these things are new and startling; to me they are old, and I can bear them. From 1812 I have seen more or less of such things, as the exhausting pressure of the war became greater. The war is now over: we have this evil, gigantic as it is, to grapple with, and its very vehemence must end it."

"But if it end in slavery?" asked Philip.

"Then," said Lawrence, "we shall know that we are no longer Englishmen, and we shall deserve slavery. It never ended so in our fathers' time, and I think it won't in ours."

"But," said Philip, "shall we be still, and do nothing?"

"By no means," replied Lawrence; "but the thing is first to know what to do, and when"

"First of all," replied Philip, "I think

we ought to make known to the landlord and incumbent of this district the frightful condition of the population, and call on the farmers to help too."

"They know it, my friend," said Lawrence. "Calm and unconcerned as you think me, I have not failed to inform the squire and the rector as became me."

"And what was the answer?"

"To confine myself to my spiritual duties, and leave secular matters to them."

"Heaven and earth!" exclaimed Philip, "can such apathy, such unfeeling cruelty, be possible?"

"Notwithstanding," continued Lawrence, "I ventured to assure these gentlemen that it was impossible to discharge my spiritual duties with any effect whilst this state of things existed. That famishing people would not, could not, in the nature of things, listen to exclusively religious topics of comfort. That the very wretchedness and insufficient accommoda-

tions of the labourers' cottages here, as in a thousand other places, utterly defeated all endeavours at religious effect. When whole families pig together, day and night, in a single room—when, hardened by want and neglect, they refuse to educate their children, and the very mode of parish relief demoralizes them, the labours of the clergyman are in vain. Gaunt necessity and a radically vicious system of parochial aid are too much for them."

"What do you mean by a vicious system of parish relief?"

"I mean this," said Lawrence. "By raising the price of corn, and lowering the rate of wages, to enable the farms to pay high rents, war-rents in fact, they have actually pauperized almost the whole of the labouring population. The farmer thinks, if he can get labour at a nominal price, he is a gainer, forgetting that he must pay in poor-rates what he does not pay in wages, destroy-

ing the independent character of the labourer at the same time. It is come to this, that farmers refuse to employ any labourers at the old prices. The labourers come to the parish, and they are divided out amongst the farmers by the overseers of the poor, by what is called "house-row work." The men are only paid some eighteen-pence or two shillings a-week, and eat at the farmer's cost, for he thinks he can save out of food that he raises himself. The families of these men go to the parish for the rest. Thus all are made paupers—pauperized in spirit, degraded in their own eyes, and made reckless and shameless in consequence. Young men, without families, are refused work at all, and therefore they marry to authorize them to demand pay. Hence improvident, and worse, unholy and shocking marriages are made, and pauperism increased. Then again, if a man or woman whines or cringes, he is favoured; if he shows any spirit, he is set down for a stubborn and

dangerous character, and is dealt hardly with —and so becomes really dangerous and abandoned. If a man goes to a dissenting chapel in many parishes, he is a marked man, and has no favour. If he goes to church, whether he goes in a proper spirit or not, he is favoured; hence awful hypocrisy, and from all these causes a most frightful destruction of every virtuous and independent principle. By these means the old English simplicity and sterlingness of character is fast being annihilated; our once happy and honest husbandmen are converted into abject slaves, and the transition to midnight poachers and reckless murderers, when opposed, is short and direct."

The agitation of Philip became more and more perceptible.

"Why, every line of your picture, Lawrence," he said, "becomes more black and horrible. The *tout ensemble* is too frightful for contemplation. But what are our clergy

about? If our landowners are thus corrupted by interest, it is the pre-eminent duty of Christian ministers to warn them of their crime and their danger, to stand forward in behalf of the poor of their flocks, and of the moral status of their country."

"But," said Lawrence, "it is the misfortune of our clergy to be bound up in the same bundle of interests with their landed brethren and the Government. The tie which binds the Church to the State makes cowards of us all. From the landed gentry and from Government come all livings, honours, and promotions. Hence the interests of the Church become one with the interests of the land and the State. Hence the clergy learn to think that there is danger from concessions to the people, and they prophesy from the high places of government. Hence the *beneficed* clergy leave their obscure haunts to substitutes like me, and crowd to town, and to such quarters as bring them

within the light of the suns and stars of promotion. Hence it was that I said to you the other day I apprehended that I have made a mistake in my profession, and that I should have belonged to the conventicle, and not to the Church."

"But," said Philip, "you would not destroy the Church?"

"No; but by cutting the tie which binds her to the chariot-wheels of the State, enfranchise and ennoble her. I would leave her her property to divide equitably for the maintenance of her necessary ministers. The labourer, however, and not the drone, should receive his hire. There should still be the pleasant parsonage and the glebe, but there should be the resident incumbent, hoping for nothing but from his people and his God. The Church, placed on a footing of its own merits, must then exert itself as the dissenter does, and the effect would not fail to be glorious. But even then I am not sure

whether I should be in my right place. I desire to work earnestly for the good of souls. But here I am checked, and enjoined not to be unduly warm, not to become methodistical. But how, then, are we to keep together our flocks? The dissenter, and the methodist who will not admit that he is a dissenter, plead and strive warmly with their hearers; they stir their imaginations, and excite their hearts—whilst we are cold, formal, lifeless, and aristocratic. What a diver into the human heart was that John Wesley! With us a layman is a nothing; with him every man is a something. If he be not a wheel in the system, he is at least a cog in the wheel. They have their class-meetings, their love-feasts—the very *agapai* of the ancient Church—their prayer-meetings, in which man is drawn to man, and every one is of some account. If I go into a chapel, I find a man who has frequently been at work the whole week before preaching with

zeal, and often with much ability. If I go into an evening meeting, I find men from their lasts and their shop-boards praying audibly with a power and fervour that warms all around them? Is it any wonder that the poor flock thither, and leave us to our frigid gentility? There will come a time when the Church will have deeply and earnestly to consider these things, and the sooner the better for it, and for us all.

"John Wesley was wiser than we. He saw the desideratum, and he endeavoured to supply it. He sought to extend the Church and its influence over the people, not to draw its poorer flocks from it. We rejected his offer; he would have enlarged our borders, but we persisted in cutting them off, and still persist in it. But it seems to me that this system, in which the politic Church of Rome preceded us, admitting its bands of irregulars, furnishes the Church with its natural dependencies, its actual colonies. The

dissenters in early days, as well as the methodists now, were but non-conformists on certain points, by conceding which we should have lost—nothing—but gained all. In our colonies we have grown wise enough to allow the people to govern themselves, and make their own institutions, so that they are not against us; in the words of our Saviour, they are for us, and by this means we have kept them as part and parcel of us. By allowing the people to listen, as Wesley does, to preachers who have neither studied at Oxford nor received priest's orders from a Bishop, but who have studied in the universities of God—those which only retain the real nature of a university, a universal school—we should retain the Bunyans and the Huntingdons, who are armed, not only with the experience of a simple and deep spiritual life, but with the language, the tones, the imagery which go from heart to

heart of the common people, as the lightning flashes from cloud to cloud."

"But," said Philip, in much astonishment at this free avowal, "with these views, why, my dear Lawrence, do you not go over to those politic and zealous methodists, or go forth to rouse the flame of political liberty amongst the population at large?"

"Because," said Lawrence, "there are a few things to be considered on the other side. In the first place, am I fitted by nature for a popular orator? I doubt it, and to fail there, is to fail altogether; and then, so far from doing good, how am I to live?—which is but saying, how am I to do any good at all? In the second place, before I could go over to the dissenting camp, I must see my way without a sense of ingratitude. What I am, I am by the Church, and the friends of the Church. I was educated by the endowments of churchmen; I was sent to college by the worthy Portland, with the understand-

ing that I should devote myself to the Church. I, therefore, owe the Church a debt, and I am anxious to pay it. And, even with the faults I have candidly noted, I could pay it, were the country in a better condition; and as it is, sick, suffering, and oppressed, I can do something, small as are my means, to assist and console those who would otherwise probably be worse shepherded. Would it be honourable, would it be generous, to desert these poor people here in their abject state, and who really have not a friend besides? Little as I can do, I can share my loaf, and my garden stuff, and the little surplus of my salary with them. I can whisper comfort and hope, if I cannot always inspire it; and to feel that I have alleviated a single care or suffering that otherwise might have been unheeded, enables me to sleep soundly, and to dig, and hoe, and hear and see God's beauties and harmonies around with the fancy that I am not wholly useless. I don't flatter

myself with the idea that I was ever meant or am qualified to act a *great* part; but if I can act an *honourable* one well, God, I persuade myself, who makes the robin sing cheerily on the handle of my spade there in the garden, sees it with as much pleasure as he does the eagle on his mountain eyrie."

Philip stretched his hand across the table, and grasped that of the young curate.

"My dear fellow," he said, "I believe you are quite right. You are more reasonable and practical than I am, and I am glad to have such a friend to counsel with in shaping my own course. For my part, I feel as if I must be up and doing something in the world towards removing the load of calamity that weighs on my country. But how, I do not yet see. We must wait awhile, and think, and see what opens up. My creed is that God has his mission for each and all of us."

The two young men continued to converse on these subjects till it was time for Philip's

return, and he retraced his steps through the fragrant dusk of a balmy May night, with many and serious thoughts, to his domicile at Slumbercumb.

CHAPTER V.

Whilst these things were passing at Slumbercumb and Waterdale, and Philip was widening his horizon of the actual world through the medium of his new friend, Lawrence Hyde, the cessation of all intercourse with his late friends at Craythorne was complete. No single letter reached him, no light was thrown on the mystery ; and the feeling that such flagrant injustice could be perpetrated in this country, at this time of day, made the young schoolmaster almost desperate. At one moment he would resolve to break away, and leave the school to take care of itself. He

felt as if he had been entrapped into a position neither suitable to his acquirements, nor profitable to him in any way. Why should he bury himself there because a forgetful man had left him there? Yet he felt, even in his rage, that he was doing Jeremiah Sterland injustice; there was the same maliciously obstructive power coming betwixt that worthy man and himself, and cutting off his kindness. Yet, again, he asked himself, would even Mr. Sterland, under the circumstances, desire him to remain there, teaching a score of young rustics their mere elements, and at a weekly sacrifice even out of his little salary? No, he would start, and, gathering up some clue at Dorking, would never cease till he had discovered the retreat of Paulina, and forced an interview and explanation. Was that demon of a Canon to hold the strings of all their lives and fortunes at his mercy.

But to accomplish this scheme, there required money. Of that he had originally

little enough, and that little he had seriously diminished by relieving the necessities around him. He felt bound, as it were, to the soil of that obscure and miserable spot. Many a time, betwixt his school hours, he paced that level flat of Slumbercumb, and followed the windings of its banks, now gay with its masses of green flags, its sheets of white ranunculus floating on its stream, and the purple loose-strife on its verdant banks. Nature, in blithe insensibility, seemed to bloom and flourish: the lark caroled in the blue air, the blackbird on the tree top, as if no sorrow were in the world—and yet within and around him all was darkness, mystery, and suffering.

The injustice which pursued him lay like a poisoned pall over the whole country.

Every week he hurried to Waterdale to obtain the "Register," which, by its description of the condition of the people, and the obstinate tyranny of the Government, only made him the more restless and unhappy. A deep

and bitter gloom began to fall on him. Like thousands and tens of thousands besides, among the oppressed and the despised, he began to question whether, after all, this world was anything but a sort of hell, the offspring of chance. Could there really be a God that could thus suffer the bulk of mankind to be trampled on by a few of their own species? —who could allow the proud, the harsh, the dissolute, the ignorant, to bask in unbroken luxury, and treat the pangs and prayers of the suffering millions with haughty indifference? Beautiful were the doctrines which his father had taught him of God's providence and fatherly care, but how were those fair and paternal attributes displayed in his father's own case? Was he not an outcast, a wanderer, expelled from pulpit after pulpit, and driven from place to place, for proclaiming those very doctrines? Had not all the good things of earth fallen to those of his family who seemed to care neither for God nor man?

And if he extended his view, how was it with all the nations that he could call to mind, whether they admitted these sublime views, or adhered to mere reflections and distortions of them? Were they not all cast down at the feet of tyrants and armed slaves, and dreaming of an Elysium of liberty and justice which never came? Was there a nation, however Christian it professed itself, which had not grown to its greatness by feeding on the blood of other peoples, by building up their very walls of power with carnage, and cementing them with oppression? Where did he discern a single light in the clouds, which told of a sun beyond: a people, a fact, which, amid the giant desolation of every abomination that covered the earth, bore testimony to the government of a just and merciful God?

The more he turned his affrighted vision on this sombre view of things, the darker it became. The force of his imagination supplied

him with ever more and more distorted and exaggerated images—his reason, catching the infection, flashed out argument after argument of the subtlest potency. He wondered how he could so long have remained blind to the facts which now seemed written on every rock and hill, which sounded in every wind and water, and lay in characters of lurid fire, wan, phosphorescent, and demoniac, on the whole weltering surface of society. What saw he there? Love, unity, humanity?—the good Samaritan binding up the wounds of the sufferers? the good Christian, feeding, teaching, consoling, and encouraging his brethren, as his Master did, and as he had so sublimely taught? No—hardness, selfishness, tyranny, stalking, without one look of commiseration, amid whole cities and legions of starving creatures, who still vainly dreamed of a God and Heaven!

The fatal infection of scepticism, which has drawn such aliment from the crying injustice

of man to man, and from the cowardice or sordidness of those who should have stood forward as Christ's teachers, and asserted the rights of his people, and which has still left such dreadful scars, nay, open wounds, in the hearts of the struggling masses—had now seized, with its envenomed fangs, the unhappy Philip, and he broke forth in tones of startling bitterness on the subject on one of his next visits to Lawrence Hyde.

The young curate looked at the gloomy face and flashing eyes of his friend, and said:—

"Alas! Philip, could not even the sainted teachings of your father save you from this curse? But it will not be able to hold a mind like yours long. It is, perhaps, impossible for any mind of activity and independent inquiry to escape it altogether. I, with what you call my practical temperament, have had my sick fit; but, thank God, the bitterness of that death is past."

"But where do you find the evidence of the Christian's merciful and just God, who is no respecter of persons, in a condition of things like the present?" asked Philip, angrily.

"I find it no farther off," replied Lawrence, smiling, "than in your own excited mind. Whence come these thoughts?—whence indignation boiling like a Geyser from the hard ground against injustice, oppression, and indifference to the distressed? They are the very wrestlings of the Almighty in your own soul against these evils. They are the very weapons given to us by this God whom we are so ready to forget, to overcome them by. If we were born to such a lot, we should lie as passive under it as a stone; but we are not, and we cannot rest. The God within us is as strong and undying as in the centre of his solar system, wielding and guiding all its planets. Let us follow this voice, obey this divine impulse, and do our duty to ourselves and the world, and then

it will be time enough to accuse or deny a Providence. My friend," said he, laying his hand firmly on Philip's arm, and looking earnestly into his beclouded face, "it is, in my opinion, because you will have to combat this insidious evil in others, that you are visited by it yourself. Having passed through the valley of the shadow of death, you can guide others through it. Fling away, then, such dark, unworthy thoughts. See, rather, the glorious field that lies before you, in which to combat against all the powers of wrong for the suffering people. On that track you will not find yourself alone. God has yet reserved his six thousand who have not bowed their knees to Baal, and how much more worthy is it for the son of Hugh Meynell Stanton to do battle for God and the poor, than to sink into the slough of despond, where there is neither light, nor warmth, nor comfort, nor the glorious consciousness, which the sceptic can never have,

but which more than consoles, which transports the crushed warrior who falls ere the triumph, that "there remains yet a rest for the people of God."

Philip sat down and burst into tears. He wept long and freely, and then, rising, he took Lawrence's hand and said:—

"I don't know how it is that your words have such power over me, Lawrence; but I have never been so miserable, so inconceivably miserable, as lately; and now you attempt to make me regain faith in spite of myself. But I must quit this place. I shall fall into melancholy or lunacy, brooding here over my own wrongs and those of the people at large. I must be up and off. I must plunge into the vortex of life, sink or swim. Here I can do nothing; in the throng of society I may, or, at least, I shall not have so much time for the devil to spin his webs about me. Here I am hipped, moped, miserable; and that I can but be;

and it is better to be so in striving to make others less so, whether I succeed or fail!"

"Go, then, in God's name," said his friend. "I shall miss you awfully, but in your present tone of mind I could not greatly enjoy your company. Your fidgets would fidget me; but away you can write to me, and I have a belief that you will make your way well. As for the school, I will look after it till some fitting teacher can be found."

Philip, that there might be no second parting, bade Lawrence good-bye that night; yet the curate walked up the valley to the very door of farmer Stulp, earnestly conversing with him; and the next morning, as Philip, with a small bundle and his stout ash plant, approached a stile leading into the fields which bordered the highway, he saw Lawrence already sitting there.

"I thought," he said, "I should like an early walk with you;" and so the two strode on together.

They crossed the fields, continued their walk along the highway for two or three miles, till Philip, suddenly stopping, said :—

"But, Lawrence, my dear fellow, do you know how far you are got? You are at least four miles from home, and what of the school?"

"Oh!" said Lawrence, "I called and left word with Mr. Spode, that the children were to have a holiday to-day."

"But now," said Philip, "I am going to cut away to the downs, and so for the nearest country route for London; I don't like tramping the highways."

"Well, then, I'll have a run on the downs," said Lawrence; "I have had a stout breakfast, and I shall be all the more ready for my dinner."

And so on they went again, discussing a hundred things which yet lay dimly in the future.

"I don't think I shall be long here," said Lawrence. "Nothing but pity for the poor

people keeps me here; and I know that the squire and rector are on the look-out for a more fitting man according to their notions. For myself, I feel a strong drawing towards my own native county, and for a more populous place, where I shall find some congenial minds. It is heavy work here, bearing one's burthen all alone. But wherever I am, you shall know of it."

The two young men now stood on the green shoulder of the downs. The vale, with its string of villages and tree-skirted streams, lay all in view at their feet, Slumbercumb and Waterdale included; and then, after a short rest on the soft turf, the two friends sprung to their feet. Lawrence ran hastily down the slope like a boy in exuberant spirits, but, in fact, to conceal his emotion, and Philip strode steadily away on his route. He had had a stiff battle to fight at the farmer's. When he told the farmer that he was going, and that Mr. Hyde would look after the

school till another schoolmaster was got, the old man looked quite thunderstruck.

"Why, Mr. Stanton," he said, "thou'st knocked all the wind out of me! Going! and what for? Because the salary is so small? Why, sir, I always meant to see you saved harmless. No, no, if that be the gravel in th' shoe, shake it out, shake it out! I shall see that you are at no loss, at any rate."

Philip assured him that he did not give the money a thought, but that he was not happy about affairs of his own, and must be in London."

"Well, well," said the old man; "then go to Lunnun, and come back. Lord bless us, I never dreamed of thee going, lad. Thou suits us so; and both me and th' wife like thy company. Go, then, go, and come back as soon as thou can."

Philip tried to convince him that it was hopeless, and then the old man said:—

"Well, I mud a known that such a

scollor could na be contented long here. We'en nowt to keep him, us poor, ignorant, simple folks. Well, more's the pity."

Philip was greatly touched with the old man's regard, and he assured him how much he felt indebted to the kindness of both himself and Mrs. Stulp, and that if he had good luck, he would come down some time especially to see them. This appeared greatly to please him, but Philip had then to pass through another scene with Mrs. Stulp, and when he escaped to his chamber he could not help exclaiming to himself:—

"Yes! Lawrence is right! There is a God in the soul of all of us. How strong and genuine is the heart of those good people! Yes, we must fight for the image of Christ in the human bosom against the tyrannies of the world."

The affection evinced by those simple souls wonderfully strengthened and encouraged him. The next morning, as he went down stairs without his shoes, to avoid awaking the

farmer and his wife, he found the old man already down, with a cup of coffee prepared for him, and a piece of cold beef on the table; and at parting he shook him heartily with both hands, and left a 5*l.* note in his palm. Tears stood in the old man's eyes as he remained at the door, nodding silently as Philip, ever and anon, turned and beckoned to him and Mrs. Stulp, who appeared wrapped in a shawl at the open chamber-window, and as he finally, ere turning a corner, took off his hat, and gave them a parting salutation.

A day or two afterwards found Philip settled in humble lodgings in Surrey-street in the Strand. He was an unknown atom moving amongst the busy swarms of the metropolis. He had little money, no means of increasing it, and no connection by which he could open his way to that vast ocean of popular usefulness at which he aimed.

The enterprise now assumed awful shape and proportions; the instrument for effecting it shrunk into utter insignificance. Who or what was he to conceive so gigantic a project? A young man without name, without property, influence, or friends.

This patriotic ardour now appeared ridiculous presumption. It was all very well for his friend Lawrence and himself to discuss such mighty projects in the remote obscurity of Slumbercumb, and to inflate themselves into an ideal importance capable of reforming the disorders of a nation, and redressing the calamities of millions. But here the matter looked much rather like insanity than anything else. A poor curate and a poor schoolmaster solemnly debating on the national disorganization, with a view to restoring all to order and prosperity; he could have laughed at the very conceit, had he not felt himself fast sinking into the quicksands of despair. Then he gazed round his little,

mean apartment, and contemplated the meagre meal which his necessity had spread before him, and he seemed to awake out of the rainbow-dream of enacting a Hampden or a Tell, with a bitter pang of self-contempt, the most miserable and excruciating of mortal feelings. Then he reflected that around him roared and rushed the life of two millions of the dwellers of the capital, amongst whom he could not challenge one decent acquaintance; and he seemed to recoil into his own absolute nonenity, and, clapping his hand on his eyes, exclaimed, "O Lord! am I a fool, or mad!"

When he issued from his solitary lodgings into the great sweeping and surging stream of life, it was not to hasten to some quarter where he was known, to some living creature whose warm hand he could clasp, and take courage; it was only to ramble on amid a torrent of hurrying, eager-eyed, sober-visaged people, all elbowing their way with a dogged look towards some definite aim—all absorbed

in some specific purpose, in which life and death seemed concerned.

To seize on the means of life, to get money, to make more; to force from the fast-racing day the required balance for the day's needs, seemed their objects—and what seemed his? A chimerical enterprise to enact their saviour, their political champion; to run a-muck, like a new Don Quixote, at the giants and windmills, their enemies. Did they need his aid? Did they ask it? Did they seem even to need any aid? To judge from the outward stream of life, all seemed much as ever. If he turned his steps towards the City, the thoroughfares looked as crowded with people in incessant march, of carts, heavy-laden waggons, cabs, coaches, grinding along in their eternal din. The shops looked full of goods; the wharves were crowded with maritime-looking men, as numerous and important as ever.

If he turned westward, the same gay crowds circled in the ring, or clogged

Piccadilly and Bond Street with their splendid equipages. After all, he thought, can these cries of national distress be real? Are they not the mere political enginery of the Radical party? He saw placards of theatres, operas, morning and evening concerts, the brilliant assemblies at Almacks, the thronging of the people to Vauxhall and other places of amusement. This did not look very like national distress. Yet he needed not to have gone far for its discovery; there were square miles of it lying all around him. In St. Giles, in Clerkenwell, Bermondsey, and all down those eastward wildernesses of Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Ratcliffe Highway, Wapping, Rotherhithe, and Lambeth. There he might have revelled in human poverty, misery, crime, and growing desperation, to his heart's full conviction, though not content. But the Metropolis is always the last place to exhibit the public evidences of national pressure. Into it there pours to the last moment the

demands for the country and the world, and its wheels keep going for some time after those at a distance have stopped. It is in the extremities of the social system that the paralysis of distress first becomes visible; it is some time ere it reaches the heart, and Philip could find plenty of accounts of cessation of trade in the provinces detailed in the papers. He knew himself that what was related of the agricultural districts was only too true.

With these fresh remembrances his courage revived; he again began to feel that he was no dreamer, no fool; but the great question remained how he was to link himself on to the system of reform; to obtain a recognition of his claims to labour for the public benefit. It was in the newspapers that he saw the active struggle going on outside of Parliament—within those privileged walls he had not even the most distant chance of raising his voice; to the newspapers, therefore, he determined

to go and offer his services. To work for the great object, he must at the same time live.

The first man that came into his mind, naturally, was Cobbett, and he resolved to call on him, and ask his advice and friendly introduction. That he could be employed on the "Register" he did not for a moment dream. That singular sheet could only be filled by the strong, trenchant, tomahawk work of that one burly and peculiar mind; but Cobbett could recommend him. His office was in Newcastle Street, just by, and, summoning all his fortitude, he was soon at the door.

To his imagination it seemed that crowds must be constantly going to that door; that such a man, wielding such a power, existing in the very centre of such interests and agitations, must hold an almost perpetual levee; and that patriots, senators, sufferers, must be ascending and descending his steps, numerous as the angels on Jacob's ladder. But all was

still at and around that remarkable door. A surgeon was getting into his gig at the next house; a few easy-moving people, of a rusty aspect, were going to or fro on the pavement, and that was all. No one's attention appeared directed towards that awful lion's den except his own. It seemed, as he ascended the two or three steps, that they had a deserted instead of frequented look. The door-handle and knocker appeared almost green with want of use.

He knocked and rung, and, after a considerable interval, a dirty boy partly opened the door, and, on his asking for Mr. Cobbett, the lad said he was not there, he was at his farm.

At his farm! What, thought Philip, can such a man, with such cares and responsibilities, be away in the country, quietly farming? Could he be speculating on corn and turnips and sheep, when the very world seemed going to pieces, and thousands and tens of thousands

were convulsively hanging on his skirt, as the only hope of worldly salvation?

"At his farm!" said Philip—"where is that?"

"Why, near Botley, in Surrey, to be sure," said the lad.

"And when will he be in town?"

"Could not say."

And with that, closing the door, Philip descended the steps, and walked away in wonder at the extraordinary nature of the man who, whilst he was agitating the political sea by his Boreal breath into the most furious tempest, like a more sublime being of old was actually sleeping in the ship which bore him through it. Cobbett, scattering through city, town, village, over the swarming manufacturing districts, full of gaunt hunger and nascent riot, the Greek fire of his "Registers," and himself calmly watching the growing of his mangel-wurzel and the fattening of his hogs in the country! To the inexperienced mind of

Philip he was a subject of amazement, which clung to him like a strange vision—but to himself it was a daunting fact, for to whom should he now turn?

CHAPTER VI.

THERE was no help for it, and he walked away, gathering up all his resolution for a visit to the newspapers. He resolved to aim at the highest first, and of the daily papers there were few which at that time took the decidedly popular tone which accorded with his notions of what was absolutely necessary. He went to the *Times*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Advertiser*, and the *Sun*. The answer was everywhere the same. They had no opening, nor prospect of any. Philip's gentlemanly aspect and dress secured him civil treatment, but curt and decisive negatives. One great editor, as he sat over his

beefsteak and bottle of port, asked him which university he was from, and on replying neither, said that was sufficient—he employed no writers who were not graduates of one of our universities. Occasionally, a bearer of honours from Dublin or Edinburgh was engaged, but he preferred an Oxford or Cambridge man.

Philip humbly ventured to ask whether the possession of the same amount of knowledge, without having acquired it at a college, might not be just as good; but the editor replied, "No, it did not carry the same weight," and, ringing a bell which hung near his right hand, he bade Philip good morning, who was directly shown down the very worn and dirty stairs by a man who appeared. At another office he got so far that he was desired to try his hand at a leader, and then they should see what he was likely to do; and the learned editor even showed him the orthodox form of the strips

of paper on which he must write, intimating that about ten or so of these strips written only on one side would be about the due length. He might take as a topic the last night's debate on the Green Bag Committee.

Philip accordingly hurried to a coffee-house, ordered the necessary glass of wine, and began a serious and laborious perusal of the enormous debate. After about three hours dreary wading through the heavy, and often absurd, speeches of honourable members, he hurried to his lodgings, and spent the better part of the night in writing and re-writing, altering and condensing, his leader. As it was his first essay, and such important consequences appeared to hang upon it, he spared no labour to render it at once solid in argument, comprehensive in thought, and brilliant and effective in style. The moment it was done, he rushed away through the nocturnal streets, and delivered it at the office, where all was movement and the sound of rolling presses.

The next morning he looked for it—in vain. The next—the next—and the next morning; when the painful conviction forced itself upon him that it was gone into the Balaam basket.

Wofully damped and dispirited—for a young writer always attributes the want of success to his own want of talent and fitness—Philip, however, mustered up courage to seek the lesser lights and weekly organs of reform. Of these, he procured a list of a length which amazed him. Of three-fourths he had never heard before; yet he found that the most of them had their world, and many of them a vast world of readers. There was the "Steadfast Weathercock," which had discovered the art of varying to every point of the political compass, yet remaining immovably on the centre of principle — the "Sober Alarmist," which endeavoured gently to agitate without disorganizing—the "Essence of Wisdom"—the "Political Diver," which always saw the grounds and bottom-springs of things—the

"Infallible Guide"—the "True Cry"—the "Daily Prophet"—the "Seer through Grindstones," concisely called the "Seer"—the "Political Trumpet"—the "Denouncer"—the "Weekly Awakener," and the "Anti-Humbug."

Of Philip's adventures amid all these journals we need only record that they ended in nothing. In one or two he was offered the use of a large pair of scissors and a pastepot, at about 10*s.* a-week; but as he aspired to something above political patchwork, he respectfully declined.

He was asked several times whether he could not penny-a-line, but on the mysteries of that peculiar profession being revealed to him, they failed to attract him. The only real offer of an engagement, as a writer of the first-class, was from the editor of the "Anti-Humbug." This gentleman, a thin-framed, thin-faced, weakly, smiling man, who Philip found uttered the most outrageous things in

his paper, but never contradicted any one personally, unless a bland smile could be construed into a contradiction, seemed greatly pleased by Philip's appearance. He took it for granted that Philip and all the world were familiar with his doctrines; but when he found that Philip was fresh from an obscure country district, though full of all sorts of knowledge, he explained to him that his aim was to expose and abolish not only political humbug, but religious, and all other sorts of humbugs. He went on to describe to Philip that the old humbugs of the Bible, of Christianity, of the idea of a God, or a hereafter, were all unanswerably exploded by his journal as utterly unworthy of credence by any philosophical mind. That the working-classes especially were the staunchest converts to his liberal views, and that in a few years there would not be left such things as churches or parsons; for the churches would be converted into halls of material science, the only real

science, and the parsons would be glad to get their living by being lecturers on this only rational knowledge.

Philip listened with an air of deference, for he felt it useless to argue against dicta that common sense and all the most able intellects of the world had turned inside out a thousand times, but he gravely remarked that, after all, his system was not perfect—it might be improved. The "Anti-Humbug" oracle eagerly demanded in what respect?

"In this," said Philip; "it is a very common and ancient superstition that the sun shines daily—that there are such things as day and night, heat and cold, hunger and thirst, disease and death—that fire burns, bees and wasps sting, horses kick, dogs bite, vipers poison, and that a man will get killed if he walk over a precipice or out of a chamber window. These superstitions," said Philip, solemnly, "are just as ancient, and just as foolish, as the others; and you would cer-

tainly raise your reputation with all original thinkers by treating them as they deserve." And with that he lifted his hat with an air of great respect, and made his exit.

The journal-world, busy and potent as it was, had no room for Philip Stanton, the embryo patriot, the great unknown of his country, except such inferior niches as would set the stamp of a fatal mediocrity upon him.

The way to his proudly-imagined field of usefulness appeared doubly walled up, and his spirits were at the lowest ebb, when he saw advertised and hugely placarded a meeting to be held at the Crown and Anchor, almost at his own door, on the 29th of July (that was the day but one after he read it), to consider the best means of relieving the distresses of the people. This roused the blood in Philip's veins, like the trumpet-note to the war-horse. It was his first opportunity of witnessing one of those great public gatherings which the

circumstances of the country made so excitingly interesting, so vividly momentous.

The battle of classes and opinions had, during this year, been growing every day more violent and more widely spread. In Parliament, the demands for reform had at once lost the timid and indifferent tone of past years, and become bold, outspoken, and determined. The property-tax had been defeated, to the astonishment and consternation of ministers, who had been accustomed to march on in unimpeded ease through oceans of taxation. In the preceding year only they had added, without a struggle and almost without a murmur, a hundred and ninety seven millions to the National Debt. The civil list was of itself eight hundred thousand a-year, and this was nearly doubled, by one means or other, to meet the enormous system of extravagance that was on foot. The wildest expenditure in all departments of Government prevailed, as a matter of course,

and the most astounding sinecures and pensions were in uncurtailed bloom, though millions were starving, and thousands sinking from affluence to ruin. There were, in fact, two courts to maintain—that of the old deranged king at Windsor; and of the Regent, the Sardanapalus of St. James's and of Brighton Pavilion, covered with crime, bloated with luxury, loathsome with disease.

But this fearful state of the public morals was fast rousing the nation to resistance. In the house there had been searching inquiry and undaunted language. Not only had the property-tax been overturned, but ministers had been compelled to abolish the malt-tax, which alone brought in nearly three millions a-year. At first, ministers turned a dogged front of defiance, and fancied that they could bear down the novel spirit by silent contempt. No taunts, no attacks, however violent, no sarcasms however cutting, could move them in the house to reply; and when they sud-

denly found themselves overborne, and the property-tax and the malt-tax gone, Lord Castlereagh coolly observed that, instead of borrowing six millions for the annual deficiency, they must borrow eight.

But they had been compelled to give way on those heads by the interests of their great supporters, the landowners being concerned in these taxes. On the other hand, they found the great pillar of support—the corn-law—attacked. There was a fierce onslaught made on sinecures, and the extravagance of Government salaries. The language in both houses was new and startling. In the Peers, Lords Grey, Granville, Holland, and Lansdowne were loud in their denunciations of the Government recklessness. In the Commons, Henry Brougham's strictures on the conduct of the Regent were declared to be "language such as had never been heard in that house before;" and the animadversion of Sir Robert Heron and Mr. Methune were nearly as

strong. Out of the house the language was becoming equally significant. The Regent was treated with the utmost freedom and disrespect. Moore was amusing the nation with "Fum and Hum." Cobbett was marshalling the people, by his "Register," into a terrible phalanx of new and hitherto unknown strength, the strength of union and discretion. He himself steered clear of Government prosecutions and prisons, by avoiding all personal libels, and urging on only general measures. In vain was the *habeas corpus act* suspended, and *ex-officio* informations launched against incautious writers— he stood strong as a tower, teaching the people his own wisdom. He showed them the folly of destroying machinery, warned them against riots and infraction of the laws, told them where their strength lay, in constitutional demands for parliamentary reform, and exhorted them to call for universal suffrage as the birthright of every Englishman.

The effect was tremendous. All men became politicians. His "Registers" were not only read by hundreds of thousands, but were read out to thousands who could not get them, or who could not read them, from the tops of pumps, and from waggons placed in lanes, and on commons. Monster meetings assembled at Norwich, Manchester, Paisley, Glasgow, Wigan, Bolton, Liverpool, Nottingham, and other great towns, and immense petitions for reform were sent up.

The Government began to be seriously alarmed. The alarm spread amid the higher and middle classes, though there was now really less individual cause for it; for Cobbett avowed, with just triumph, that where the people were permitted to unite and petition there were no riots; but where this was refused—as at Dundee—the people broke out and plundered above a hundred shops. Another feature of the times, however, augmented the alarm. The Sunday-schools of the

last thirty years had enabled numbers of working men to stand forward as stump-orators of no mean powers; and the effect of their harangues on the ignorant but excitable masses was dreaded with a new and intense dread. Terror had a wonderful effect in arousing "benevolence," and the court, the aristocracy, and the great dignitaries of the Church came hurriedly forward with numerous schemes for alleviating the sufferings of the poor. There were great subscriptions to establish soup-kitchens in the large towns; and nobles and magistrates were seen busily dealing out soup to famishing crowds, and ever and anon tasting a spoonful with an air of intense satisfaction, and exclaiming, "Excellent soup for the poor!"

The skilled artisans of Nottingham, Manchester, and Glasgow, who had eaten of the tree of political knowledge, looked considerably askew at these soup-kitchens, and said, "Give us work, and we'll make soup for our-

selves." In Glasgow they took offence at some remarks by the gentry, and demolished the kitchens and threw the soup to the dogs. The cry was still for work, and not charity, and the Government and aristocracy were in haste to comply with their cry. But how? The schemes which were then soberly proposed for employing the people on the subscription funds, instead of offending them by giving these in charity, read now like burlesque. Lord Castlereagh's nostrum was the most celebrated, to set one company of men to dig deep holes, and then another to follow them and fill them up again. Other philanthropists as gravely proposed that the women should be employed in shelling the beans in the fields, instead of their being threshed; that women and children should gather rushes to make rush-lights with fat, in order to save candles; others should weave baskets of flags for sale; and men should mix coal dust and clay for fire-balls to save coals, and make

ropes from the fibre of nettles and hop-bines. Instead of wind and water-mills grinding the corn, people were to be largely employed in grinding it in hand-mills: as if the threshers, the candle-makers, the basket-makers, the ropers, the colliers, and millers would not have wofully suffered from all this, whilst the mass would have been very little relieved.

It was now to be seen what fresh or what more effectual remedies the princes and prelates at the great meetings of the Crown-and-Anchor had to propose, and Philip was in trembling impatience for its arrival.

The important day came, and as the hour approached he issued from his lodgings and directed his course thitherward. Though the meeting was called at noon, an hour when it was supposed that few of the lower orders would be at liberty to attend, it was clear to Philip that large numbers of that class were on their way thither. Amid the great life-stream of the streets there was a visible cur-

rent setting in that direction. Numbers of eager, earnest-looking men were rapidly advancing towards the Crown-and-Anchor tavern. There was a crowd of ragamuffins already around its doors, and a number of carriages, with noble emblazonments, were drawing up and setting down their owners.

Philip soon felt himself being borne along by a bustling, rushing crowd up the stairs, which seemed vastly too narrow for the ascending throng. Presently he was borne along a huge, long room by the same living impetus, and being early he was carried three parts of the way up it. The room was furnished with rows of benches across it, upon which the inrushing crowd seated themselves unceremoniously, many of them striding from bench to bench to reach the highest possible. When Philip found himself seated, and the tide of men still rolling in behind with unabated impetuosity, till the place was full, he had time to observe the aspect of all about him. There

was a capacious platform at the head of the room, on which stood a table with writing materials, and a number of chairs yet unoccupied.

The flood of people behind him yet swelled and rolled on, till every side walk, every window seat, every vacant place, in fact, was filled to repletion; and the place presented a dense, black-looking mass of men, who soon began to evince their impatience by stamping and clamouring to let the unseen leaders know that it was time to open business.

The survey which Philip had thus taken of the crowd around him struck him with a strange feeling of the arduous office of an orator. To arise and address those wide-awake, determined, self-satisfied, and, as they appeared to him, politically acute men, now seemed no trifling matter. A man, he thought, should have something very uncommon to say, and a masterly power of saying it, who undertook that office. To him, who had never seen such an assembly, much less addressed

one, it gave a cold feeling of terror and despair. To desire to rescue a nation, and to possess the ability to do it, now seemed things wondrously wide apart. He trembled at his own temerity, in the absence of the actual battle.

But he had not much time for these reflections. A door opened on the platform, and in walked a number of gentlemen, several of whom he could observe wore ducal stars on their breasts, and the thunders of acclamation from the dense mass around him appeared to him to indicate that some of these were royal personages.

He could hear those around him say, "That is the Duke of York—that is Cambridge—that is Kent—there is the Archbishop of Canterbury—there is Wilberforce, and there comes Castlereagh.

As the last-named—a tall, handsome man, in a plum-coloured coat—moved across the platform, there burst forth a hiss from amongst the crowd, which, however, was

quickly drowned by the clapping and stamping of others. It was moved that the Duke of York take the chair, and a sallow-looking, middle-aged man, in blue-coat with gold buttons, buckskins and top-boots, came forward, and with profound bows to the audience, and amid repeated cheers, seated himself on the chair by the table.

His royal highness addressed the meeting in a few words, expressing much sympathy with the sufferings of the people, and trusting that the distinguished men that he saw around him would propose some efficient remedies. The Duke of Cambridge then proposed a resolution, purporting that there was great distress in the country, the cause of which was the sudden revulsion from a state of war to a state of peace. He proposed likewise subscriptions all over the country, and that employment of some kind should be found for those out of work. The Duke of Kent followed, and expressed much hope that the good feeling of

the country would carry it through this crisis, which he imagined to be only temporary. All so far went tolerably well.

Philip did not see much in the royal speakers to raise his ideas of royal capacity for oratory ; but, he thought, in the good-natured gossiping manner of the Duke of Cambridge, and the earnest sympathy of Kent, there were qualities to admire and esteem.

No sooner did the latter Duke sit down, than there stepped forward from a remote corner of the platform to its front, a tall, thin man in naval costume, having the round, fair face, the light-blue eyes and sandy hair of a Scot, who moved an amendment.

At once there burst forth a tempest, as if heaven and earth were coming together. The gentlemen on the platform, and numbers of persons on the front seats, sprung up shouting, gesticulating, crying "Order, order! question, question!"—but, at the same moment, the huge mass lower down rose too, shouting:—

"Well done, Cochrane! stand to 'em, Cochrane! hurrah for Cochrane!"

The shouting, the stamping, the bellowing, the fierce commotion, as if the infuriated crowd would have rushed at once to mortal combat, was such as Philip had never witnessed before, and of which he had no conception.

"Are such, then," he said to himself, "the furious elements of popular assemblies?" Is it amid storm and tornadoes like these that the popular speaker has to make his way, and do battle, as with the furies, for public right?"

It was sometime before the hubbub was put an end to; and at last Cochrane, for he it was, could get a hearing. He denied that the cause of the distress was the change from war to peace—but the necessary consequence of the extravagant management of the war, of corruption in every department of government at home, which, with arbitrary measures still existing, destroyed the mercantile

energies of the nation, and which must be abolished before there could be a return to prosperity.

Again the uproar burst forth with redoubled violence. The whole body of the people, whether on the platform or below, was like a roaring, foaming ocean.

All possibility of proceeding appeared at an end; but the royal chairman, holding up a paper, and gesticulating for silence, at length procured enough to say that he proposed to leave out all mention of the causes of the reaction, and only affirm the fact of the distress. This was carried by acclamation, and the meeting then went on for some time.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, and some others, suggested various remedies for the popular suffering. These, however, were but of the same stamp as the bean-shelling and nettle rope-making, and were received sometimes with shouts of laughter, and sometimes with storms of groans and hisses.

In the midst of this scene, Philip suddenly, as if carried away by an uncontrollable impulse, sprung upon the bench where he sat, and shouted, "Hear me!"

The act was the signal for a fresh storm. Some cried, "Down with the demagogue! Order! order! Down with the disturber!" Others around him cried as lustily, "Hear the gentleman! fair play! hear him!" The chaos was wild and deafening. Some attempted to drag him down by the skirts; others, standing on the seats around, bellowed loud above everything, with faces inflamed with passion:—

"Hear him! You shall hear him or nobody!"

At length the Duke of York was able to ask him his name; and he shouted "Stanton!"

At that word there was a marvellous change of the whole scene.

"Stanton! the devil!" exclaimed the men about him, who now seemed as if they would annihilate, instead of defending him.

"Stanton, indeed! a traitor! a borough-monger! a Castlereagh hole-digger! Down with him!"

But on the platform there was a universal clapping and hurrahing.

"Come up, come up!" they cried; and, the friends of that party before him making way, Philip ran rapidly from bench to bench, and sprang on the platform.

"Are you a relative of Sir Marmaduke?" asked the royal chairman.

"His nephew," replied Philip.

The duke rapped loudly with his ivory hammer on the table, and cried:—

"Mr. Stanton, the nephew of Sir Marmaduke Stanton!"

It was some time before silence could be obtained, but then the Duke said:—

"Mr. Stanton, have you a resolution to submit to the meeting?"

"I have," replied Philip; "and it is this, that the only remedy for the paralysis of the

nation—the only means to feed the people, and revive our trade—the grand source of prosperity—is to abolish the Corn-law!"

It would have been almost a recompense for a ten years' imprisonment to have witnessed the effect of that last word. There was a momentary silence, as if a thunderbolt had fallen in the midst of the assembly, and struck them speechless; but the air of astonishment flung over the whole dense mass above and below would have been a rich study for a painter. The blank consternation, the dead take-in of the gentlemen on the platform—the equally unexpected result to the crowd, was beyond all words.

At once a thundering din of acclamation burst from the throng. There was stamping, jumping, beating on the walls; a thousand hats were whirling violently above their heads—a thousand throats stretched to their utmost, to fling out the big exultation.

Amid the rending uproar, the cries of

"Renegade! cheat! impostor! down with him!" were perceptible from the disappointed platform. All hope of restoration of order vanished. The royal dukes quietly took their leave; the rest followed, some of them retreating through the side door, with reverted looks of wrath and gestures of vengeance.

The next moment the platform was occupied by a fresh set of men, who, like a huge wave, rolled up and plunged, as it were, upon the political strand.

The deafening applause was renewed, and cries of "Bravo, Burdett! bravo, Cartwright! bravo, Cobbett! bravo, Cochrane! bravo, Hunt!" resounded for some time.

As the chaos cleared itself a little, Philip found himself in the midst of a throng of gentlemen, who, with faces all radiant with triumph and gladness, shook his hand one after another, as if they would shake off his arm.

"Bravo, Mr. Stanton!" said a tall, rosy-

looking farmer. "You hit the key-note—you touched the magic match which exploded the whole humbug affair. The Corn-law! that was the word to send all their cant of benevolence to the winds!"

Philip had a score causes of astonishment at that moment; he was an astonishment to himself, but more than all was he astonished to hear a farmer thus denouncing the Corn-law.

"What!" said Philip, "do farmers so detest this law?"

"Ay, sensible ones; and I, at all events, farmer Cobbett!"

Cobbett! this, then, was the great Registrar, whose gigantic mind had roused Philip from his social lethargy, and was rousing the whole nation. Philip gazed with profound interest on the great man, great physically as intellectually; the tall strong farmer in his blue coat and gilt buttons, his yellow swan's-down waistcoat, kerseymere small clothes, and top-

boots, his grey eye twinkling with a thousand buoyant meanings, and his rosy cheek flushing crimson with the triumph of the moment.

But there was not much time for observation: a loud hammering on the table called universal attention, and Philip saw an old, white-haired, venerable man, standing there in his plain brown surtout and top-boots. And a still taller, aristocratic-looking man proposing that Major Cartwright take the chair. The motion received an instant acceptance by one grand acclamation. The venerable Major accordingly took the chair, and congratulated the meeting on the triumph of the day. Sir Francis Burdett (for it was he who had proposed him) then addressed the meeting. He too congratulated it on that great triumph. Not, he said, that he was, or would be, on any account a party to any disrespect to the illustrious personages who had that day appeared there to recommend to their attention the sufferings of their fellow-men. With that

recommendation he went heart and soul. He received the recommendation with the profoundest respect, and thanked, as he was sure they all would do, their royal highnesses most gratefully for urging such sacred claims upon them. At this there was considerable applause.

But whilst he seconded with all his power the royal recommendation, whilst he said, "let us all, here and everywhere, subscribe, to the utmost of our ability, to relieve the sufferings of the unemployed, he must go further," he said, "and as earnestly recommend the adoption of the only efficient means, the reduction of taxation, the renunciation of extravagance, and the repeal of the famine-law." And now the burst of applause was thundering.

When he could again be heard, Sir Francis added:—"And, gentlemen, I congratulate you on the event of this day—the bold, decisive deed of my young friend near me. That one word, uttered at the right moment

—the Corn-law! shivered the might of the enemy as a house of glass is shivered by a stroke of lightning!" There was loud cheering. "I congratulate you," continued the baronet, "on the accession of an invaluable ally. Mr. Stanton is evidently a young man of a powerful and vivid genius. He is of a family which is fast bound to conservative principles, but Mr. Stanton is the good son of a good father. Gentlemen, when we most of us were young, and timid, and acquiescing, my own countyman, Hugh Meynell Stanton, the only brother of the present Sir Marmaduke, was the solitary champion and the uncomplaining, unswerving martyr of the principles which we are now doing battle for. But, gentlemen, these principles, persecuted in him, live!—and they live in a son who has to-day shown us that he is a true son of a great father, and who, I trust, is destined to do signal service to his suffering country."

This generous and fervid eulogy was responded to by the assembled crowd with every demonstration of exultation. Philip found himself at once the hero of the day, amid the most noted of the leaders of the people, Cobbett, Hunt, Cartwright, and numbers of others.

When the meeting broke up, Sir Francis requested him to call on him in Park Place the next morning; and hundreds, one after another, rushed on the platform to shake hands with the new champion of reform.

Cobbett, however, soon led him away, and he quickly found himself in a private room, where a good dinner was served up, and where the chief leaders of the people spent the evening in rejoicing over the triumphant result of this great day.

Philip was astonished to see the gay banter and jolly laughter in which Cobbett, that man of iron as he had seemed to him in his writings, indulged, which was in striking

contrast to the wordy oratory of Hunt, and the mild, sober discourse of the venerable Major, who was always looking at principles and measures that were to be carried, whilst Hunt overlaid them with heaps of verbiage. Cobbett, ever and anon, shot forth a bolt in a single phrase, which dropped sophistry and imposition dead to the earth.

CHAPTER VII.

When Philip found himself at a late hour alone in his lodgings, his blood and brain were in a whirl and fever, such as he had never experienced. From a state of gloomy despondency, with deep misgivings of his own aspirations and powers, as well as of opportunities, he had at once sprung into the very centre of the great political arena—was hailed as a victor, and welcomed as a friend and coadjutor by the magnates of the popular cause. Poor, friendless, as he thought himself but that morning, he had now friends and a field equal to his highest ambition.

He did not, in his inexperience, perceive how much he owed to his birth and family. How much the very tempest of applause had originated in the idea even of the mass that he was a gentleman born, and, therefore, a hero worthy of their homage. For however much the people of this country may denounce ranks and honour, however much they pish at hereditary descent, and profess to feel no respect for a man but as a man, on all occasions they demonstrate their inborn homage to the accidents of circumstance. Even at this day, so long afterwards, how almost universally do we find the most democratic constituencies electing men who have no recommendations to represent them except their family position, their wealth, or their landed influence.

Philip owed immensely to these feelings, in addition to his handsome and manly person. He was, in the regard of the people, a champion won from the ranks of the

enemy. He was the member of a family noted for its staunch and uncompromising support of the Government and its most arbitrary measures. He stood forth thus, in the very blaze of patriotism, which seemed to them to cost him everything which men commonly are least willing to sacrifice. They thought him not only a gentleman, but a gentleman sharing the property and power of his family. They little knew that he was living in mean lodgings in Surrey Street; had broken into his last 5*l.* note, and had in vain endeavoured to discover a means of achieving the receipt of another guinea. The reflected splendour of an aristocratic sun cast on his cloud arrayed him in the hues of the rainbow; and his popular admirers had not yet, like our modern philosophers, learned "to unweave the rainbow," and thereby discovered that its glories were but reflection. Philip's fame in a few hours had grown into a greatness that even he had no conception of.

The next morning, on taking up the newspapers to read the account of the meeting at the Crown-and-Anchor, he was astounded at the figure he cut there. The part which he had acted in suddenly obeying an impulse, and, amid the conservative and the courtly recommendations of benevclence, as suddenly recommending the repeal of the Corn-law as the *solidarité* of all benevolence, was eulogised by the reform press as the one instance of the most marvellous courage, and of the most profound sagacity, in so young a man. He was represented as the Robin Hood of political archers, who, when the most practised hands were shooting, many of them even wide of the target of the true fact, suddenly stepped forward and struck his arrow into the bull's-eye. Some observations which he had made in reply to the compliments paid him by the speakers in the second meeting, and of which he had only a most confused remembrance, his real impressions being only a wild recol-

lection of a thousand excited faces fixed on his, and a strange obstreperous din of clapping hands and hurrahing voices—he found these extending over a couple of columns of what was pronounced to be the most vivid, the most exciting, the most harrowing and astonishing piece of eloquence which had been heard since Burke and Sheridan poured their vials of superhuman wrath on the devoted head of Warren Hastings. Such a scene of horrible destitution in the rural districts had never been exhibited to the startled gaze of civilized man.

Not all the terrible annals of Irish misery, or Indian oppressions, could approach the sublime horror of its revelations. The youthful orator, flashing with the very lightning of a glorious genius, had stripped away the hypocritical cloak from the obdurate aristocracy, and shown to the world their unexampled infamy. Would it be believed that these very men who declared that the corn-law, the

famine-law to all the country besides, was necessary to the comfort and existence of the rural population, were, in fact, literally starving down the poor labourer on their estates; that they were literally muzzling the oxen which trod out their corn, and that gaunt famine, and its consequence, wolfish revenge, were crouching in all those humble homes of the land which poets delighted to adorn with all the charms and amenities of Arcadia? Where were the rose-embowered cottages, the old white-headed father seated at his door, with his grand-children playing about his knees, and the bees humming on the rustic bench beside him? Where were the new milk, and the cheese and the butter—where the honey and the sparkling home-brewed ale, which they had so long fabled as the luxuries of the English cottage-home? Where were the venerable or the young and comely couples walking, a whole hamlet, in pious groups to the ancient village church, and listening, in

pious happiness, to their beloved and paternal pastor?

The whole *horribile dictu* was a wild, a fearful, and a blasphemous delusion, on the testimony of this enlightened young nobleman, they had almost said, for he was of a family titled, and holding property and position superior to those of many noblemen; on the testimony of this young statesman, who dared to slip out of the dragon-guarded circle of aristocratic exclusiveness, and proclaim to the world what he himself had seen. Instead of all this charming and Elysian life, England was one wide scene of oppression—more relentless, more granite-hearted, more ogre-like than ever had affrighted the dreams of Eastern despots. Wretched huts, in which whole families crowded together, without food, without decent clothing, without decency in any respect —without work, except miserable, degrading parish-work — without comfort, content, or prospect in this world or the next. And, what

was the worst feature of all, the clergy, who should be the natural champions and guardians of their flocks, were the timid slaves or the unblushing allies of these Pharaohs, these task-masters of the land, who demanded of the unhappy people bricks, without giving them straw.

Though Philip recognized not only strong lines of truths, and strong traits of his own feelings, in this oration, and in the comments upon it, he could not for the life of him recall the act of having uttered them, or of having spoken in a manner which warranted so sweeping and unmeasured a style of denunciation. It seemed to him that his speech must have been a *Philippic* indeed, if it were anything like that. But when he turned to the other side of the press—to the Conservative, or, rather, the full old Tory one of those days, he was utterly horrified at the colour in which he was painted. The meeting was described as one of the most disgraceful and

disloyal exhibitions which had ever outraged the public sense, and degraded the character of any country. The most illustrious and most venerable personages in the realm—the sons of the good old monarch, the head of the national Church—had been rudely, fiercely, diabolically interrupted, insulted, and actually driven from a public meeting called for the most sacred of purposes—the saving of the suffering masses from famine. That the occasion had been converted into a scene of brawling vulgar and hideous, of riot, violence, and every crime, except bloodshed, which had stamped the French Revolution with infernal infamy. And how long would that very bloodshed yet be averted? Amid that storm of anarchy and atheism, a baleful meteor, in the shape of a young man of most distinguished family, who, forgetting all that he owed to his country for the position he held, the splendid education that he had received, ay, for the very magnificent talents which he had

thus plunged into the stinking Styx of a fell, revolutionary democracy, had suddenly blazed out in most ominous lustre, and scattered round him a demoniac frenzy and intoxication which had roused the mob and a knot of notorious Jacobins to actual madness—chased from the scene heavenly philanthropy and all its champions, and turned the sacred occasion into an appalling orgie of fiends, hobgoblins, and rampant satyrs.

That young man, so capable of august, of unimaginable triumphs in the noblest fields of statesmanship and senatorial fame, was received as an angel from heaven by that party of anarchs. But what an angel! O Lucifer, Son of the Morning, how art thou fallen! How must thy noble relatives, continued these journals, mourn over thee! And think not, young renegade, it was added, that such treason can escape its inevitable reward. Amongst the fallen there can be no friendship. For a time the cockatrices of a low and political

caste may smile, and rub their snaky folds slimily against thee, but in the end they will assuredly sting, and sting mortally. Meantime, young man, beware of the very consequences of thy triumph. Beware of sowing the dragon's teeth, which will spring up armed men! Beware of bloodshed, of anarchy, of confusion, in which the innocently deluded shall perish in heaps, and their blood shall cry to Heaven against thee as their destroyer! Beware of a worse, an inexpiable crime, that which misleads simple and ignorant men, and brings the very blood of their imperishable souls on the head of their seducer!

In this tirade, bitter as it was, there was, however, some sense of respect, some semblance, at least, of a humane pity over the supposed fallen one; but in others there was all the abuse, without any of its mitigating features. In these Philip was described as a vain coxcomb, led into his mad course by mere desire of notoriety; in others he was a base, self-

seeking incendiary, a fiend, a paltry atom of a fiend, a toad, a viper. There were no terms vile enough to heap upon him—no motives black enough to ascribe to him. He was represented as seeking to blast the characters of princes, prelates, of all who held property and station, and especially of the clergy, whom he stigmatized as deistical hypocrites, knowing very well that their religion was a humbug, but keeping up the solemn farce for their daily bread.

At this last stab Philip flung down the paper containing it, and stamped on it in indignation. He, the son of Hugh Stanton, entertain deistical notions!—the indiscriminate brander of the clergy! The stab went deeper than that act of indignant rage could heal. It left a profound and clinging sense of anguish; and he could not rest till he had snatched a sheet of paper, and dashed off a fiery denial of the truth of the charge, and an imperative demand of the printing of that

answer the next day. But Philip little knew yet the field, the men, or the warfare on which he had just entered. We need only say here that the answer duly appeared, but followed by another tirade equally outrageous, still more subtle, and appealing to Philip's own speech for full justification of their strictures.

But no sooner had he written this note than he was obliged to run and call a cab, for his time to wait on Sir Francis Burdett was already passed. He dropped his note into the letter-box just by, and hurried away. Philip found Sir Francis quietly writing in his dressing-gown and slippers in a large plainly-furnished room, which looked something worn, as being the reception-room of the numerous political characters, deputations, and the like, which were continually calling on the radical baronet. What most attracted Philip's attention in the place was a fine bust of John Horne Tooke.

Sir Francis received him very cordially; bade him not apologize for being a little after time, he had not noticed it, and pushing a number of newspapers towards him, congratulated him on the very flattering terms in which they noticed his *debût* into political life. He was too polite to hint a word regarding the strictures of the other portion of the press. Philip, however, could not refrain from expressing his deep mortification at the base views attributed to him by that class of journals.

Sir Francis smiled.

"So you have been tasting the poisoned honey."

"No, not honey, certainly," replied Philip, eagerly.

"Honey of wasps, Mr. Stanton, honey of hornets, the sweetest of all honey to an honest man who has learned to discern tastes, whose palate has become experienced. Whatever your friends may say, Mr. Stanton, be sure that

your enemies are honest in their abuse, and in proportion to your real merit as a patriot will be the intensity of their calumny. Read all that backwards, and it is the most valuable praise. When the Athenian patriot heard himself praised by his foe, he asked what crime he had committed to merit that eulogy."

"But," said Philip, with a flushed cheek and glistening eye—for he was imagining whither the strictures he had seen would reach, though his letters could not—"but what must my friends think of me?"

"Ah!" said the baronet, "all that is well understood now-a-days. It is set down to its true cause—party virulence. You must harden yourself to all that. Who has been so much abused as myself, yet I neither eat, drink, nor sleep the worse for it. I know my own integrity of purpose—God and good men know it, and in time all the world will know it. Or, no matter, if they do not know it, it

still exists, and will exist. Who is at this moment so atrociously abused as Cobbett, yet what an immensity of good that man is doing; and one day, if you live as long, you will see his most unscrupulous, his most pitch-and-filth spattering enemies pouring out their eulogies on his memory, outsounding his very friends, over his tomb. Then they will deify him for his pure nervous Saxon style, for his ponderous intellect, his crushing, macerating hammer-strokes of wit and logic and sarcasm, and for the very good which they now pronounce his evil. My good Mr. Stanton, you don't, I hope, expect to walk over the burning ploughshares of the fierce politics of to-day in silken slippers? If you do, you are not the man I take you for, and I do look upon you as a man, and expect much from you."

Sir Francis then spoke of the strong and affectionate memory he had of Philip's father; of the never-to-be-forgotten days in the woods

of Foremark, when two youths they had walked together, and Hugh Stanton had detailed those sublime and Christian principles which he clearly showed were meant to pervade every department of life and morals, politics, science, theology, and all social existence. Philip felt wonderfully elevated and comforted, and, remembering how heroically his father had suffered without a murmur, he resolved to steel himself unshrinkingly to his duty.

Sir Francis then unfolded to him some of the leading statistics of politics. He made him aware that there was a system of associations organized, and extending throughout the whole country, especially in the manufacturing districts, called Hampden Clubs. The object of these was to form a centre in every town and village for the work of reform. By this means reformers in each locality had a bond of union and intelligence. The men most fitted to take

the lead in each locality soon became apparent—and thus leaders were established, and sound politicians formed. Each of these clubs or societies had its chairman, its committee, and held communication with the rest in the district by delegates, and thus again with the other districts, and the metropolis by the delegates of delegates. Thus the whole country was brought into contact and harmonious co-operation. The people were trained for the furtherance of reform, and made ready for instant action whenever it became necessary. By this machinery all proper intelligence was diffused, and the people were quickly warned of the designs of their enemies. The primal objects of the Hampden Clubs were constitutional reform, and parliamentary representation, through universal suffrage—that was, of a vote inherent in every man of eighteen years of age, of sound mind, and who paid taxes. That the principles of this reform of parliament

were to be alone carried out by petition, and by renunciation of physical force. That there should be demanded annual parliaments—no pensioner or placeman to be allowed to sit in them, talent and virtue to be the only qualifications for membership ; and that the country being divided into electoral districts, every twenty thousand male inhabitants should send up a member.

Philip expressed his unfeigned admiration of the leading features of this plan. It reminded him of the system of Tables by which the reformers of Scotland had, under the tyrannous reign of the Stuarts, established their political independence.

Sir Francis said he was right. That he himself was president of the parent society in London, which met every few days at the Crown and Anchor. That for some time the committee had been looking out for a suitable person, a man of talent, education, eloquence, and address, as a missionary to the local

clubs all over the country. Such a man would be able, being in daily correspondence with the chief society, to ascertain and keep the heads of the movement informed of the real state of these associations; to arouse the zeal of the reformers, and direct it into the right channel all over the country; thus vastly to enlarge the border of the reform world, and to knit it up in ever-growing strength.

Now, he continued, that it seemed to him as if Heaven had expressly sent them Mr. Stanton for this very office. It was an office that required certainly a combination of powers and qualities that rarely met in one man. It was a most eminent office, in his opinion. Such a man must have the fullest confidence of his employers, so to call them, his political friends at head-quarters; and he must be able to win over the confidence and zealous attachment of the working-classes all over the country. He must be able to stimulate them by his eloquence, and encourage

them by his counsels. He believed that the son of Hugh Meynell Stanton was that very man.

As Sir Francis went on developing these views, Philip became more and more struck by a deep sense of the requirements and the responsibilities of this proposed office, and when the baronet had expressly declared that he was counting upon him to discharge it, he seemed altogether paralyzed by the idea.

When Sir Francis had done speaking, he sat silent and motionless; and at length throwing off the oppressive feeling with an effort, he said in a low but earnest voice :—

"Sir Francis, I am confounded! The thing is not in me! I should fail—I should disgrace you, and then should never forgive myself!"

"Well, well," added Sir Francis, kindly, "I can understand your feelings. But depend upon it, you could do it, and well, and easily.

At all events, try it. I have mentioned it to Cartwright and Cobbett, and they are delighted. So think it over, and come and take luncheon with me to-morrow at one. I am going early to the house to-day to a committee, and there will be strong debate to-night,—and by-the-bye, you would like to hear it."

He wrote an admission to the gallery of the house, and so bade him good morning.

Philip walked back to the Strand in an extraordinary state of mind. At first, the idea of the proposed mission appalled and oppressed him; but soon it flashed upon him that it was the very thing which of all others he had aspired after. To be the exhorter, leader, and teacher of the people; to awaken them to the full sense of their rights and of their power through union—why, it seemed as if Heaven had expressly answered his prayer, and given him the whole field, and everything that he had asked. He

put up an aspiration for strength and guidance, and felt a glow of animation and confidence flow into his heart that astonished him. His choice was taken: he would accept the offer, and trust in God to bless and prosper it. He entered his room with a new and happy feeling, and a novel sight presented itself. From the hour that he first entered it, no single person in the character of a friend had crossed its threshold, no single letter or note of friendly greeting or remembrance had enlivened it. He had written off to inform Lawrence Hyde of his wonderful success, but had not yet, of course, received his answer. But now there lay a perfect little mountain of letters, cards, and newspapers. He took up the cards in wonder—they bore the names of men eminent in the ranks of reform, and of many of the very editors on whom he had called in vain. He opened the letters: there were three invitations to dinner, five invitations to *soirées* and evening parties at the

houses of noted reformers. There were enclosed tickets of admission to theatres, operas, and concerts, and several earnest requests that he would honour trades' clubs by his presence at their meetings; a respectful request that he would move a resolution at a great gathering of the Spenceans, a body of whose existence he was hitherto ignorant; and similar solicitations to the "social smokes" of reformers, of names and designs which were to him the mysteries of mysteries. He opened the newspapers, and found them copies of many of those which he had read, both laudatory and vituperative—for the stingers are generally more anxious that their stings should not be shot forth in vain, than the eulogists that their encomiums should reach their object.

There was a polite note from the editor of the "Steadfast Weathercock," proffering his perfect readiness to dispense with Mr. Stanton's not being a graduate of any uni-

versity, and to put him on his staff as the leading writer—such genius superseding all ordinary forms or considerations. There was another from the "Political Diver," making a similar offer—and stating that he was charmed beyond expression with the brilliant leader Mr. Stanton had sent him, which press of matter alone had delayed appearing. Philip saw that it actually did embellish the chief column of the "Political Diver;" and the attention of the reader was drawn to it by a paragraph announcing that it was from the universally-acknowledged master-mind of the age.

CHAPTER VIII.

Scarcely had he made his way through this chaos of papers and notes, when there was a ring at his bell, and his landlady, with a face of wonder at the sudden storm of papers and persons that assailed her door, and all directed towards her hitherto unmolested lodger, handed to him the card of the learned editor of the "Anti-Humbug." He had already been there, for one of his cards was on the table. That bland, slender, and meekly-smiling gentleman showed himself at the same moment, and congratulated Philip on the unexampled sensation which he had created. Never was there such

success since the outburst of Chatham or Burke — never so trenchant, scarifying a style since Junius nibbed his terrible pen, and he was delighted to see that Mr. Stanton had cast to the winds his tender scruples about the Church and the clergy. No! no such chaff could possibly live in the fire of such a genius. It must perish in the flame, or fly on the winds of such strength. Seeing that, he had been again encouraged to propose that Mr. Stanton should honour the "Anti-Humbug" by the splendour of his talents. He had now to name his price, and select and handle his topics as he pleased.

Philip felt greatly tempted to knock the man down, but to touch roughly such gentle-pleading, such complimentary amenity would have been savage; he contented himself with saying his visitor laboured under a trifling mistake — that he probably alluded to the assertions in some of the newspapers that he was an enemy to the Church, if not, indeed,

to Christianity. He could only say they were pure inventions, and most impure and impudent lies. That however he might deem some clergymen defaulters in duty, he had no right to brand them as insincere as a body; for he had no knowledge to that extent. That for himself, he honoured the clerical office; his own father bore it, and bore it nobly. He honoured Christianity as the supreme blessing of existence; as the source of all sound principles, social or political, and of all those sentiments which could alone refine and elevate the race.

The learned editor smiled incredulously.

"No, really!" he said. "Was it possible? Could such exploded puerilities co-exist with the keen perception of humbug in politics, and in such a mind?"

"Humbug!" said Philip; "sit down, sir, and allow me to tell you what I consider the greatest of all humbugs. It is that of the man who endeavours to steal from the simple and miserable the solid belief in a future

life and a compassionate Saviour, and gives him nothing instead. To take something and give nothing is the part of a thief, and he who takes from the poor man his God, and gives him nothing instead, not a hope even of a better life than this, is the worst of all thieves, in my opinion."

"But if such supposed God should not really exist?" said the smiling atheist.

"Sir," said Philip, with dignity, "how many times has the Almighty been dethroned, and his revelations been exposed as the most ludicrous of impostures by a creature that could not lift a grindstone, and that often is not able to earn his daily bread! In how many ages has the fountain of all knowledge, mind, and wisdom been ignored by the drop that glitters its little hour and is exhaled! The dust on the footstool of Omnipotence rises in rebellion against the august majesty of unmeasured ages. The midge in the swamp swears proudly against the mountain, a mil-

lionth part of whose bulk it can never comprehend. The dwarf, cowered in a remote corner of the orb-peopled universe, boasts that it knows the whole stupendous scene and scheme of things. A little decrepid homunculus, in a closet of ten feet square, and with eyes that need spectacles to see the page before him, dogmatizes on the infinite—pretends to weigh and number the incalculable multitude of laws, powers, principles, and living essences which regulate and fill the universe of universes; sees deep through regions that he cannot travel, and substances that he cannot analyze. The profound mushroom of to-day scouts the eternal sun, which has seen millions of mushrooms and of men spring and fall from age to age. What spirits of archangels, created before the solar system, are not yet informed of, the omniscient philosopher has discovered in an instant, through the darkness of this lower sphere, and bound to his one spot by his clog of flesh. How won-

derful must be the man who can seize on God and all that he has made, and shut them up in a book of a few inches long, or in the columns of a flimsy journal!

"In short, sir, he who expects to superannuate the Bible must first find a substitute as old, as illustrious, as firmly based on historic evidence, as richly embalmed in the tears of the sorrowful, in the prayers and hymns of saints and prophets, in the blood and holy confidence of martyrs, in the halleluiahs of the redeemed, in the meek divinity of a Saviour, and the glorious paternity of a God. How profound must be the folly, how pitiable the egotism of any mortal man who imagines that he has anything to offer which can satisfy these demands!"

"You are sarcastic, sir," said the oracle of atheism; "but I assure you, Mr. Stanton, that we consider all these ideas quite exploded."

"*You* consider!" replied Philip; "but

what is the great fact? Look back through the ages, and behold what has really been the success of the sceptic, the atheist, the Sadducee, the advocate of negation, in each and all his shapes. *Have* they convinced mankind? *Have* they overthrown the seat of God in the heavens, or in the weak and wayward heart of man? Have they chased away the meek and forgiving Saviour from the abodes of suffering humanity? Have they prevailed on the remorseful to forego Christ's aid, or the smitten in conscience to cease to cry to him? Have they convinced mankind that this gospel is the folly or the fable that they have so diligently proclaimed it? Have they been able to take him down from the Cross on which the impolitic Jews, in their wrath, lifted him up to the gaze and scrutiny of all time and all eternity? No! they themselves give the damning answer; for if He were slain, if He and his Cross were uprooted, thrown down, and buried deep in the abashed

earth, deeper than the sepulchre which could not detain Him, covered for ever in the unfathomed gulph of darkness and oblivion, they would no longer have a motive to fight with Him. Men do not contend with shadows, but with living substance; and, still contending with Christianity, they thus, spite of themselves, confess it to be a living substance. Heroes, as all sceptical philosophers imagine themselves, could find no glory in vanquishing the vanquished—in calling up all the power of intellect, and all the artillery of erudition, to combat an already annihilated foe. It is, in fact, not the weakness, or the spuriousness, or the worthlessness, or the inefficiency of Christianity, but its life, its wisdom, its power, its prevalence, which call up, from age to age, so many enemies—which stimulate them to so much agonized virulence, and teach them to search its armour of proof with the keenest glances of a deadly hatred.

"Behold, my friend, the battle-field of

time! Whose bodies are they which lie there? Whose bones are they that whiten all the way? Search them well, sir, and let us know whether the Son of Man has fallen amongst them. Alas! for the cause of the enemy!—the bones are the bones of the mighty Goliaths and Abimelechs of unbelief! There they lie, bleached, broken, and sapless. Not all their armour of pride and opinion, not all the weapons of their wit or their wisdom; their pointed sarcasms, their keen-edged syllogisms, their brightly-burnished hypotheses, their demolishing artillery of facts and arguments, their clinging Greek fire of well-compounded lies, have availed them. They lie a disgraced and sorely discomfited host; for though they are thousands, and their opponents have been but two—God and his Christ—nay, by their boast, no God no Saviour, but merely empty phantoms of superstition and priestcraft—they stand fast amidst all these fallen assailants.

"That, sir," said Philip, "I must deem a sad and shameful defeat of the great warriors and worshippers of the Baal of unbelief; and you surely ought to begin, at least, to suspect that there must be some innate life, some indestructible essence in this repudiated God and this despised Saviour. Were it only as a principle of policy, you should hold by them as infinitely the stronger party."

"Sir," said the smiling editor, "that is admirably put. I wish you would write it down for the 'Anti-Humbug,' and put your name to it—it would call out a whole tribe of combatants, and sell a stupendous number of papers. I could afford really a great price for it!"

Philip stood confounded, not by the arguments of the man, for he used none, but by the cool and ready-money light in which he saw these most momentous topics. He quietly opened the door and gravely bowed him out.

When he had dismissed his extraordinary visitor, he saw it was time to hasten to the House of Commons. He had been warned that on a great night it was necessary to be early, as the stranger's gallery was very confined. He made haste to be there before four o'clock, and on finding his way up a narrow staircase into a sort of lobby or anteroom, he found a considerable number of gentlemen already standing there and conversing in groups. He was almost immediately accosted by a young man of friendly and intelligent aspect, but whom he had not seen before. He requested to know who did him the honour to address him, and the man said:—

"My name is Cleary, Thomas Cleary; I am secretary to the Hampden Club, and had the pleasure of hearing your admirable speech at the Crown-and-Anchor."

Philip felt very glad to make the acquaintance of a person with whom he was likely to have so much connection, and who could tell

him the different leading characters in the house. Cleary, indeed, quietly made him aware of several active reformers of one school or other amongst the groups standing around them.

"But," said he, "the time for opening the gallery draws on; let us get near the door, or we may be shut out; it is such a little poking place, and the men with the silver keys will get the start of us."

"Who are the men with the silver keys?" asked Philip.

"Why, those," said Cleary, "who come with half-a-crown in their hands instead of a member's admission."

The door opened, and there was a sudden rush and pressure. The door-keeper cried—

"Keep back, gentlemen, take time." But Philip saw that he was looking over their heads, though they held their notes full in his face, to others behind, who quietly put the silver key into his hand. Cleary, however,

said hastily to the keeper—"Here, don't you see we block up the way?" and thrust their tickets upon him. He moved a little aside, and in they went. The little gallery was speedily choke-full, and Philip saw on the back and most elevated seat a row of young men, with pens and paper, whom he correctly set down as reporters from the daily papers. Afterwards, he observed, from time to time, men appear, and the reporters hand to them what they had written, who disappeared rapidly with the manuscript.

"Yes," said Cleary, "these honourable gentlemen have their speech in type almost before they have well done."

But where were those honourable members, those celebrated representatives of the great nation of England?

At first, Philip could see little but some lamps dimly burning on a table down at some distance below him. By degrees, however, the scene became more visible, and he disco-

vered a somewhat small but very dingy room, where a company of men were sitting on rows of benches rising above each other on each side, with their hats on ; and in front, betwixt them, rising a tall, square sort of seat with a canopy, and a man in a gown and wig sitting there, with three or four other men in gowns and wigs sitting before him at a table covered with a green cloth, and the mace lying before them. These, he comprehended, were the speaker and the clerks of the House of Commons.

There was a gentleman addressing the house on the left hand, not far from the speaker, but in so low a tone, and with such pauses, and hems and haws, and circumlocutions, and repetitions of the same words, if not of ideas, that Philip could make little of him or his speech, and nobody else seemed to be paying any attention to it.

"Why," said Philip, "can this be the Commons of England, and these the men who

shake the whole civilized world by their words? To me it looks much more like a cock-pit than a senate of the greatest people on the globe."

"It is just that," said Cleary, laughing; "it is a cock-pit, and the cocks will both spur and crow, I daresay, ere long. At present there is nobody in the house. The big-wigs and great guns won't be here till after dinner. At present we have only a sort of ignoti, chiefly of the genus bore, who are maundering about what nobody cares to hear, and which they themselves don't understand. Look! the reporters are resting on their arms. You won't find a word of all this in the papers in the morning."

But presently there was stir and attraction. The pens of the reporters were racing over their paper, and Philip saw a gentlemanly figure, with bald head, rise to his feet, and speak, what about he could not tell for the life of him; but the reporters heard it evidently with

their accustomed ears, for they were jotting down every syllable of it.

"That's Canning," said Cleary.

And Philip's attention was instantly fixed. But he was not much the better for it, for the great orator had only made some trifling reply to a question by a member, and was seated again. Meantime a number of other distinguished personages had entered and taken their seats; and Cleary pointed out the tall figure and fine face of Burdett, the model of that race of full-grown, commanding-looking men, with faces clever, grave, and somewhat sharply defined, which is instantly recognized in every quarter of the world as the English gentleman. Near him sat Cochrane, whom Philip at once recognized; and a tall, wiry sort of man, with a singular face, all animation and impulse, as impatient to leap forth, who, Cleary informed him, was Henry Brougham. Opposite to him, he was deeply interested in making himself acquainted

with ministers whom he looked on as the oppressors of his country, and the obdurate enemies of the toiling millions. The tall, handsome figure, and equally handsome face, of Castlereagh was most prominent. He sat looking on the scene before him with a grave and immovable visage, as if he were by no means concerned in what was passing. Near him sat a less remarkable figure, but in whose mild face and deep-seated eyes there was obviously a more keen watchfulness of all that was said and done. That was Lord Sidmouth; and near him Cleary pointed out Liverpool and Vansittart.

Philip perused their faces, forms, and bearing with deep scrutiny, but was forced to confess that had he met them in general society he should not have detected the great statesmen in them. They looked like a thousand other men. In fact, the general appearance of the members struck him as something very common and mean. He

could, he thought, have selected an equal number from the passengers in any great thoroughfare who would have far more the look of gentlemen and statesmen.

"But what do you suppose the bulk of these people are?" said Cleary. "The nominees of borough proprietors, or of Government. Men who serve here for their fees to keep down the cries of the people—to drown, by their insolent dissonance, the voice of genius and patriotism. You'll see presently."

As he spoke there arose a strange hubbub. A tallish man, in a loose, careless dress, was up and speaking. There were derisive cries of "hear! hear!" laughter, shouts of "order, order! question, question!" and the orator, turning a defiant front on the house, declared that "honest Jack Fuller was sent there to speak, and speak he would, for all their stupid noises—Jack Fuller cared for none of them." With some difficulty he was reduced to silence, and he then marched out of the house.

"Why," said Philip, "it is like a pot-house rather than a parliament."

"Oh! it's that fool Fuller; his constituents should insist on his resigning. He is drunk at this moment. At least once a-week he has to be sent to the coal-hole."

"Where's that?" asked Philip.

"Oh! into the custody of the sergeant-at-arms."

But another member was now addressing the house; and though he seemed to be ridiculing and lashing nearly all around him, all listened. It was Tierney, whose wit and sarcasm kept the house alive by their never flagging fire and pungency, though he launched forth the bitterest truths on the state of the country, and the crimes of the Government, that the King's English could bear. He was followed by Sir Francis, who replied to some strictures on the proceedings of the reformers at the Crown-and-Anchor, and defended them against the charges of disloyalty and disrespect

to the first men in the country. His speech was a clear and manly vindication of the aims and principles of the reformers; but Philip could see that, during the whole of it, Brougham could scarcely keep his seat. His whole frame seemed under the influence of galvanism. His features worked; his eyes flashed; he moved from one side to the other, as if the cheers and cries from the different parts of the house fell upon him with a painful sense. Scarcely was the baronet seated ere he started up, like a fiery horse prepared for a leap, and, with much gesticulation, was pouring out a torrent of words in a decided northern accent. For some time, however, little of the connected import of his words could be caught, for as one of the most decided enemies of the venal faction that nearly filled the house at that day, he was assailed by a storm of noise and strange out-cries, to which even the scene of the Crown-and-Anchor seemed tame to Philip. The

whole place, which a little before seemed the very "Castle of Indolence," some members lolling against pillars, others lying actually on their backs on the more vacant benches, with a leg occasionally thrown high into the air from crossing their knees; others writing notes in a gallery that runs along the side of the house, as if totally careless of the debate going on, now became alive, and even frantic. Some shouted, some whistled with shrill intensity, some stamped on the boarded floor with their boot-heels, some coughed, hooted, roared; some laughed like maniacs, some brayed like asses, some crowed like cocks. Never had such an infernal chaos of base sounds been heard out of Pandemonium except in that honourable house—the seat of the collective wisdom.

In the midst of this amazing scene the orator stood fiercely determined, unmoved he could not be called; his every nerve seemed to quiver with indignation, and he flashed

defiance on the satyr-like crew. At length the storm wore itself out, and was preceded by derisive cheers, for now that extraordinary reformer was lashing the reformers with a merciless scourge. He declared "the Corn-law, which some reckless greybeards, and raw, inconsiderate youths"—here Cleary looked quizzically at Philip, who, new to ridicule, blushed like a boy—"the Corn-law," he repeated, "which some reckless greybeards, and raw, inconsiderate youths deemed the cardinal sin of the nation, he deemed, on a moderate scale, good and wholesome, as calculated to carry the country through its difficulties." "But," he went on, "the great genuine difficulty, the real cause of alarm to the nation, was that reform, which should be at once sober and searching, was espoused by persons whose conduct excited no small degree of disgust out of doors." "Hear, hear!" burst from every corner of the house, and cheers and applause once more drowned the voice of the speaker.

"And does this man call himself a reformer—a friend of the people?" exclaimed Philip.

"Oh! that is nothing to Harry Brougham," replied Cleary. "Hear how he is pitching into us poor Hampden Clubbists. Brougham is an Ishmaelite—his hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him; when his blood is up, he will hurl his withering sarcasms around on friend and foe. But no matter, we must take him as he is; his heart is right, and there is a world of yet undeveloped victory for humanity in it. Where is the man, not even excepting the robustious and knotty Cobbett, who has the same gigantic force, the same wonderful range of intellect? Sir, we may forgive much in Henry Brougham!"

And time has fully verified the words of honest Thomas Cleary. When we recollect what Brougham has done in the world of letters, sound criticism, statesmanlike writing,

in hunting down and dragging to light corruption in all quarters—in wresting from the sordid grip of private usurpation the magnificent funds of education and charity bequeathed by ancient patriotism—in vindicating an oppressed woman against the whole combined power of royalty and arbitrary, subservient ministers—in putting down the consuming Hydra of taxation, and championing the rights of manufactures and free-trade—in rending the chains of the African, and steadily advancing education to its due position, conducting that true liberator of mankind into city, town, and hamlet—and when we compare public education, public mind, public feeling, now with what it was then, we remember less what we have to forgive than what we have to hold in eternal remembrance of the marvellous labours of Henry Brougham.

Philip listened with increasing amazement to the harangue of that singular orator. By

degrees he seemed to have utterly quailed the fierce crew around him, and his speech rolled on like some majestic thunder-cloud against the wind of opinion, flashing forth fires on every side, and smiting down tree, or rock, or living thing of resistance, as if he carried in his own brain the fiery power and corruscating genius of a whole tribe of men.

"That is wonderful!" said Philip, as he and Cleary arose at about three o'clock in the morning to seek their homes. Cleary, who lodged in the Adelphi, gave Philip his address, and our friend promised himself much pleasure in this new acquaintance.

CHAPTER IX.

When Philip, who was indulged with a latch-key, entered his room nearly a week after this time, on returning from a party, he beheld a number of notes as usual on his table, but he determined to leave them till the morning, when the address of one caught his eye, and instantly it was snatched up and opened. It was from Helen Freemantle! At length the spell was broken!—the silence was dissipated!—here was token of a long-missed friend! He ran over the paper with quivering nerves and a rapid glance. It was dated "Blandethera Castle, Connemara, Ireland,"

and burst at once, without preamble or personal address, into these words :—

"Oh! Philip! Philip! what have you done? You have ruined all! After so many months of painful patience, of unbroken silence, but of unshaken, unshakable faith in you, that all should end thus! What a pang you have sent into every soul that loved you! What a triumph to your enemies! But it is done! —done!—done for ever! Even Charles, even Paulina, give you up! Oh! what fatal frenzy has possessed you, and caused you to plunge headlong into this odious, disgraceful, irremediable gulph of perdition! You, the son of such a father! You, the beloved of such a woman! You, the admired of your friends, who have suffered so much for you; who have pledged their very judgment, their very principles for you; who have sworn on the inmost altar of their hearts to your faith and truth and nobility—thus to have humbled us all! Humbled! alas, were that

all! What would we care for mortification, for any feeling which could touch ourselves, if we could but stand face to face with you and say—'It is false! They may lie against him, but we know that he will never be a traitor to his religion, his country, and his God!' But when your friends and allies claim you as the champion of revolution, as the calumniator of the Church, as the violator of the throne, what can be said? And what your friends exult in, your natural foes only accuse you of. We have read your speech with horror! Oh! what glorious powers desecrated!—what magnificent hopes overthrown! To read of you as the associate of levellers, as the comrade of deists, the eulogized of rankest atheism! Your wrongs would claim pardon for much indignant aberration—but this! it is something more than madness, it is blasphemy and misery unspeakable! And yet, could you but have one minute's glimpse of the desolation you

have caused here, it might even bring you back to repentance, if not to peace. I am your sorrowful friend—friend so long as you would have me so —

"HELEN FREEMANTLE."

To describe the effect of this letter on the horror-stricken young man would be to describe his sensations had the house fallen in upon him, and buried him, crushed yet living, under its ponderous ruins. Stunned, yet with all the consciousness of his agony, he sat with the letter in his hand. At one flash of his imagination he saw the whole extent of the mischief. With the horror of Paulina more than any other of her family of any violation of the sacred respect due to religion, of anything hostile to her patrimonial church, he could well conceive the contempt with which she must have read the damning howl of exultation which the infidel papers had raised on his incidental remarks on some of the

clergy in the part of the country where he had been.

It was not enough, he felt sure, for his friends to have read the distorted portraiture of him in the Tory papers, though that would be bad enough. Some one, and there could be no doubt who, had carefully put before her the loathsome eulogies of the "Weekly Awakener," or the "Anti-Humbug." The Canon had achieved a terrible triumph, and he had taken the speediest opportunity of hurling his fiendish vengeance on the head of his victim with annihilating might. Not a single letter had hitherto escaped his comprehensive, iron grasp, but *this* had been permitted to reach her. He seemed to hear devilish laughter, as in exultation over such a *coup-de-main.*

"This finishes all!" he at length said, rising with a face of pale and strong despair. "Nothing can ever remedy this! I am a doomed, ruined, miserable wretch. With

such an utter desolation, of what use is life? Fame?—Patriotism?—dreams of wide benefit to others?—where is the heart for them?"

He paced the room in a state of wild stupor, in which the deepest aching agony lay in the very heart of his benumbing woe. Yet every moment his distress grew and grew. A crowd of new torments rushed arrow-like through his mind, which stung him almost to madness—the sense of losing all that he loved and valued, so suddenly, so utterly, so unjustly—to have all his deepest affections, his noblest sources of pride, thus rooted up by such a hand, and flung, as it were, into the streets. The distance at which his alienated friends were, the little chance of any explanation being suffered to reach them, were thoughts which drove him almost frantic. It was impossible for him to make such a journey; if he attempted it, would not his ever-watchful enemy prevent him finding his friends at this same distant spot? What

was he to do? It was impossible not to do something, if he were to retain his senses. He, therefore, resolved to try whether he could not manage to get a letter to Helen. He sat down instantly and wrote and wrote for an hour. He declared himself perfectly unchanged in opinion or affection. He entreated his friends not to judge him by the descriptions of his enemies, but to believe him that he was in every respect the same man whose principles they had so cordially shared, and whose religious faith was as pure and fervent as when they knew him. Helen reminded him of his father. Alas! he was only too like him. Persecuted, maligned, and abandoned for his faith in the eternal truth and universal applicability of the doctrines of Christ. He offered to give them any proofs of his unaltered nature and opinions. He referred them to the curate of Slumbercumb, where he had recently lived, one of the most conscientious clergymen that he

knew, to satisfy them on this point. His only crime (and could they think it one?) was that he was anxious to remove the unexampled sufferings of the poor, and that every man should enjoy the benefit of the laws and benign institutions of this his great native land.

Daylight found him at his sorrowful task; as soon as the hour of the morning allowed, he carried his letter to Thomas Cleary's lodgings, and requested him to direct it for him, that a strange hand and seal might afford it a chance of passing the vigilant emissaries of the Canon. Cleary was shocked at the appalling change in Philip's appearance; and when he saw the address which Philip had written on a strip of paper, "Miss Freemantle," he naturally concluded that it was some unhappy love affair, and, without a remark, but only by the sympathetic kindness of his manner, making Philip feel how much he was concerned, he performed the little

office of friendship, and begged Philip to stay and breakfast with him. But he excused himself, merely observing that an act of extensive treachery had destroyed his appetite; and so took his leave. The letter was posted, but we may feel assured that it never reached its destination, for it brought no answer.

If the wily and indefatigable Canon had a personal malice to indulge, from the memory of Philip's observations in the park at Craythorne, beyond the object of preventing his alliance with his relatives, he would have had an exquisite enjoyment if he could have seen the perfection of his revenge. He had hit his enemy in the moment of his youthful triumph—he had smitten out of him every atom of joy and rejoicing, every sense of the mere pleasure of existence. He had blighted all his prospects and embittered his whole being at a blow. If the consciousness that his adversary was miserable could make him happy, he was one of the happiest of mortals—his victim

was certainly one of the most wretched. We will not linger on the woful week that Philip had yet to spend in London, ere he set off on his great expedition to extend the spirit of reform among the working-classes of the country. He had visits to make, and duties to perform, and he steeled himself to perform them. He dined with Sir Francis and a party of the leading reformers; with Cobbett at his house at Kensington, and with the venerable Major—the more he saw of that simple-hearted man the higher rose his admiration of the purity of his principles and the singleness and nobility of his aims. He seemed to him to embody the very character expressed by our Saviour in the words, "An Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile."

In numbers of others he was more and more astonished to see how much more there was of self-seeking, how little of real patriotism. The idea of personal leadership in these was, he fancied, infinitely stronger than the

idea of the supreme good; and he very early augured much confusion and weakness from the disregard to the great fact that in great enterprises personal precedence must ever yield to the idea of a regulated subordination, an aiming only at the general benefit. But around him he saw some dozens, nay scores, each of whom was striving to stand first where there was but one vacancy on the point of the political pyramid. It was clear that the result must be rude concussion and a number of crushing falls.

As it was necessary that he should have a thorough knowledge of the existing political parties and movements, he went, under the guidance of Mr. Cleary, who had a frankness and warmth of feeling that won extremely on him, to various evening meetings of political reformers, Spenceans, trades' clubs, and the like.

Spite of the weary heart and deep anxiety that Philip bore about with him on these occasions, he could not help being much amused by

the strange haunts into which he was led, and the strange characters he there encountered.

A remarkable man of the working-classes from the north, whom it was his good fortune soon after to become acquainted with, namely, the operative poet, Samuel Bamford, has given us his sketch of some of these trades' clubs; and as it was purely the experience of our hero, we may present it to our readers.

"Several times I attended meetings of trades' clubs, and other public assemblages of working men. They would generally be found in a large room, an elevated seat being placed for the chairman. On first opening the door, the place seemed dimmed by a suffocating vapour of tobacco, curling from the cups of long pipes, and issuing from the mouths of the smokers in clouds of abominable odour, like nothing in the world more than one of the unclean fogs of their streets (though the latter were certainly less offensive, and probably less hurtful). Every man would have

his half-pint of porter before him; many would be speaking at once, and the hum and confusion would be such as gave an idea of there being more talkers than thinkers—more speakers than listeners. Presently 'order' would be called, and comparative silence would ensue; a speaker, stranger or citizen, would be announced with much courtesy and compliment. 'Hear, hear, hear,' would follow with clapping of hands, and knocking of knuckles on the table till the half-pints danced; then a speech, with compliments to some brother orator or popular statesman; next a resolution in favour of parliamentary reform, and a speech to second it; an amendment on some minor point would follow; a seconding of that; a breach of order by some individual of warm temperament; half a dozen would rise to set him right; a dozen to put them down, and the vociferation and gesticulation would become loud and confounding. The door opens, and two persons of middle stature enter; the uproar is

changed to applause, and a round of huzzas welcomes the new comers. A stranger, like myself, inquiring who is he, the foremost and better dressed one? would be answered, 'That gentleman is Mr. Watson, the elder, who was lately charged with high treason, and is now under bail to answer an indictment for a misdemeanour, in consequence of his connection with the late meeting at Spafields.' The person spoken of would be supposed to be about fifty years of age, with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner, and a degree of respectability and neatness in his dress. He was educated for a genteel profession, that of a surgeon; and had practised it, and had moved in a sphere more high than his present one. He had probably a better heart than head; the latter had failed to bear him up in his station, and the ardour of the former had just before hurried him into transactions from the consequences of which he had not yet escaped. His son at this time was concealed

in London, a large reward being offered for his apprehension. The other man was Preston, a co-operator with Watson, Hooper, and others in the late riot. He was about middle age; of ordinary appearance; dressed as an operative, and walked with the help of a stick. I could not but entertain but a slightful opinion of the intellect and trust-worthiness of these two men, when, on a morning or two afterwards, at breakfast with me and Mitchell, they narrated, with seeming pride and satisfaction, their several parts during the riots. Preston had mounted a wall of the Tower, and summoned the guard to surrender. The men gazed at him—laughed. No one fired a shot, and soon after he fell down, or was pulled down by his companions, who thought, no doubt, he had acted fool long enough."

Such were the scenes and persons with which Philip made acquaintance, though a few months anterior to the date of this description; and he was frequently called on to

address them, to the wonderful delectation of those smoky politicians, who were enraptured with the eloquence which had just enchanted the great leaders of reform.

From the trades' clubs, Philip, with his friendly and shrewd Mentor, Thomas Cleary, complied with various invitations from the Spenceans that the popular champion should honour them by visits at their different head-quarters—at the Cock, in Grafton Street, Soho; the Mulberry Tree, Moorfields; the Nag's Head, Carnaby Market; Merlin's Cave, in Spafields; and No. 8, Lumber Street, Borough.

These philosophical philanthropists, Philip discovered, were what would now be termed Communists. They were the St. Simonians and Fourierists of England of their day. Like the levellers, in the time of the Commonwealth, who began to sow corn and plant roots on St. George's Hill, in Surrey, and invited all men to come forward and join them

in a state of Gospel equality, to throw down all enclosures, and divide equally the fruits of the earth, the Spenceans—who derived their appellation from a Mr. Spence, a schoolmaster, of Yorkshire—called on Government to take all the surface of England into their hands, and divide the produce equally amongst the individuals of the common English family. The world has seen many of these benevolent theorists, both before and since, who are anxious to bless mankind by recalling them to primitive Christianity, or, more frequently, primitive nature without Christianity, but who have never had the good fortune to get any large amount of listeners amongst those who have the good things of this world in their grasp.

The Spenceans also called on Government to put down all machinery, as the worst enemy of man—hostile to simple nature, and to every man's sitting under his own vine and his own fig-tree. But as the Government, so far from

hearkening to their patriarchal cry, treated their founder with legal severity, the Spenceans were resolved to pull down the Government. They had a grand scheme for buying over the soldiery, at the trifling cost of two millions sterling, or about 100*l.* a man; and, as afterwards was charged against them by the notorious Castles, whom they had admitted to their counsels, they had contrived terrible machinery for burning out and destroying such soldiers as refused to sell themselves, for seizing the Tower, and for making themselves masters of London.

Amongst these stalwart philanthropists, who, like Mahomet, carried the sword in one hand and Paradise in the other, figure conspicuously this very Mr. Watson, Preston the operative, "who walked with the help of a stick," the celebrated orator, Hunt, and a Mr. Thistlewood, who presently became known as one of the most desperate men in existence, and, in 1820, paid the penalty of the gallows

for his famous Cato Street plot, in which he and his comrades were to assassinate the whole batch of ministers together at a cabinet dinner.

We may conceive the astonishment of Philip, who went to these conventicles of sedition, imagining them the haunts of an amiable philanthropy, to hear schemes of violence and doctrines of physical force promulgated. To his pure, straightforward, and disinterested mind, the horror and disgust of such schemes were inconceivable. In his speeches he denounced all such notions as shallow, short-sighted, and as mischievous as they were detestable. He told them that if they thought to cope with Government by force, they would find it more than a match for them ; but that, by uniting their powers and numbers within constitutional limits, they were invincible. He pointed out to them the superior wisdom of Cobbett, who urged the people to conquest by legal and moral force.

This advice from a champion, from whom they had expected the most unlimited charter of agitation, fell like cold water on the glowing philanthropists. Thistlewood, in the meeting at Merlin's Cave, sprang up and asked Philip, "Where was the power of moral force without physical force at the end of it? Without that, mere moral power was the serpent without its sting, the lion without his teeth and talons. How, he asked, had the Hampdens and Cromwells won reform? How had the Scotch won the independence of their religion and their country? Why, by arms, not by talk; in the field, and not in the study!"

The applause which hailed this sally denoted the prevalence of this doctrine amongst the Spenceans. Philip heard a man near him say, "The young 'un is clever, but he is green yet. He is a long way from being up to the mark. Give me a musket, to send my moral arguments into the beggarly Castlereagh."

Philip replied to Thistlewood, that fighting had been necessary in its time, but that that work was already done to our hand. The Magna Charta was vindicated—the Bill of Rights was our bulwark; we had only to demand their full operation, and no Government could live that long refused this. But with the Spenceans our hero was pronounced "yet to have the shell on his head;" and he, on his part, warned the leaders of legitimate reform, that a storm was brewing in this quarter which might damage the cause immensely.

"This wild notion of fighting and assassinating," said Cleary, "is, in truth, the thorn in the side of reform, and may yet play the deuce with it."

One day, whilst meditating on these things, Philip received a visit from another Communist apostle, no other than Robert Owen of Lanark. There was something in this celebrated man's appearance which greatly

impressed our friend. He was a tall, strongly-built man, with a broad, ruddy countenance, on which lay the mild and unmistakable expression of a simple and benevolent heart. He appeared to be about fifty years of age, but in the very vigour and prime of his strength and powers. There was a certain old-fashioned gentility in his plain brown dress. His coat was cut square at the collar, and had an ample length of skirt; his waistcoat had its ample flaps and covered pockets, and his broad-brimmed hat had a quiet and primitive look about it. He addressed Philip in a friendly manner, in a voice somewhat grave and slow, but full of feeling. In a word, Philip was impressed with the conviction that this was no advocate of the guns and drums of revolution, but of genuinely and humanely-entertained philanthropy.

He was at much pains to explain to the young man just commencing the campaign of reform, the only principle on which it could

be effective, namely, of returning from the vicious and artificial condition of our present civilization to one more consonant with nature and justice.

"What!" said Philip, in alarm, "Spencean principles!"

"Heaven forbid! my dear young friend," replied the philanthropist. "No, by principles of peace and love. We must have all this Sisyphean labour in vain, of building enormous factories, enormous cities, enormous warehouses, palaces, and ships, swept from the face of the earth. Mankind must come to recognize that all that it wants or can use with real comfort springs annually from the earth. What we have to do is to cultivate the ground and enjoy it in peace."

He then went on to describe his system of quadrangular villages, in which there should be a proper proportion of tailors, shoemakers, weavers, &c., and the rest of the population be employed in cultivating the corn and fruit

on which all should live, all receiving their due share.

"But," said Philip, "how is all this to be brought about? How are you to induce the Government to consent to this, or the owners of land and other property to submit to it?"

"Nothing easier," replied the philanthropist; "the governments of all the world are at their wits' end. They cannot go on with their army, and loads of policy and debts, like millstones about their necks. They are all coming to my views. They are compelled to it. In a very short time you will see all these great, cumbrous cities, with their awful mass of crime and misery, vanish; all these great useless ships broken up, and made kitchen fires of; all these long lines of useless canals filled up, and peaceful villages smiling amid their cultured plains and flowery meadows, and inhabited by people who have nothing to do but to raise

the necessary food, and enjoy the pleasures of science and philosophy in their common halls and libraries."

Philip smiled at the Utopian vision.

"In fact," he said, "you are to bring back the golden age."

"Heaven forbid!" replied the calm sage; "gold and silver, the root of all evil, will be despised and trodden under foot, as they deserve."

"A simple Christian community," added Philip, "all love, plenty, and justice!"

"Heaven forbid!" again ejaculated the imperturbable philosopher. "No Christianity, but a sensible and sublime theism."

"No Christianity!" exclaimed Philip; "why no Christianity, which, it seems to me, must have inspired such humane and unambitious ideas."

"Because," continued Mr. Owen, "every religion of faith is a bloody religion."

"A bloody religion!" exclaimed our hero.

"Christianity a bloody religion? The religion of the Prince of Peace! The religion heralded by angels with the message of 'Peace on earth, and good will to men'?"

"Nevertheless, a bloody religion," went on the great Communist; "did not Christ himself declare that he came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword?"

"True," replied the amazed young man; "but surely so profound and experienced a mind as yours does not confound the inevitable results of the first preaching of Christianity with its doctrines and real mission! You surely need not be told that Christ here was alluding to the certain effect of the antagonism betwixt his new doctrines of peace and forgiveness of injuries, and the old arbitrary and revengeful spirit of the world. The whole of Christ's gospel consists of inculcations to love one another, in which love there could be no bloody strife."

The theorist, who stuck to his one idea,

with a tenacity that blinded him to all else, leapt, as was his wont, over the fatal objection to his charge, as if it did not exist, and went on to detail the coming glories of his plans.

Philip listened patiently for about an hour, and perceiving that the good man's zeal amounted to a species of monomania with which it was useless to contend, merely remarked:—

"But grant all that you advance, Mr. Owen, and still it strikes me as a great political blunder to have made an onslaught on Christianity. From all I can see, Christianity and you aim at the same objects—to bless and improve mankind; to wean them from false ideas of wealth, false glory, from vice and all oppression; why, then, should you have made an enemy of this power? Even if you did not believe in it as a divine revelation, yet as the sacredly held faith of nine-tenths of civilized men, why recklessly, needlessly

array it hostilely against you? Why should not it and you have been friends, thus avoiding a stupendous amount of difficulties in your path?"

The good man, who had spent a large fortune to increase the happiness of mankind, and who has since happily embraced this Christianity, appeared to pause and reflect.

"That," he said at length, "is what never occurred to me. I must think of that; it is worth thinking of, and I thank you for it." And he took his leave.

Not many days after Philip suddenly felt himself arrested in the throng of Fleet Street by some one grasping his arm. It was the philanthropist Owen, who said:—

"You were quite right. Why make enemies which might be friends? That is sound philosophy, and I have adopted it. No more attacks on Christianity. Let every tub stand on its own bottom," and, with a friendly nod, he hurried forward.

Philip felt a pleasant self-complacency in having dropped an effective word in the mind of the amiable enthusiast.

CHAPTER X.

But he had not yet done with philanthropic theorists. Accepting an invitation to the large house of Mr. Minto Morgan, author of "The Revolt of the Bees," he found himself in a numerous company, amongst whom he was introduced to a Mr. Greaves, a teacher of the philosophy of Christianity, who was regarded by a large class of active and inquiring minds as the very father of their faith; and a Mr. Buckingham, a young man full of speculative ideas, and with a wonderful fecundity of language, destined to become widely known. But the grand affair of the evening was to

inculcate the principles of a communism, as it appeared to Philip, differing little from the worthy Robert Owen's, except that it was Communism with Christianity and Church-of-Englandism to boot.

The philosopher had displayed on the wall of his drawing-room an enormous picture of a model village, with its modest dwellings, its ample market-place, its halls of education, science, and recreation, and surrounded by its nicely cultured fields and gardens—in fact, a specimen paradise, to be raised on the foundation of the present cumbrous and corrupt system. Unfortunately, the harmony of the evening was broken by a fiery Spencean, who, on observing the tall spire of a church rising in the centre of the town, exclaimed—

"What! a church! are we to be all churchmen? Where are the chapels? Where the temple of freethinkers? None of them? No? That, then, blows up the whole thing, sir!

I declare it to be a bishop's scheme in disguise!—a painted, hypocritical humbug! A church catch-penny affair!—a hoax and a snare, most transparently covered!"

The violence of this attack threw the whole company into confusion. Mr. Morgan mildly endeavoured to explain; Mr. Greaves suggested that every Christian sect should have its own village; Mr. Buckingham so warmly approved, that he declared he would at once memorialize Government for a grant of the New Forest to try the scheme on an ample scale; and others deprecated such a breach of courtesy in a man's own house.

But the Spencean was not thus to be silenced. At every fresh wave of Mr. Morgan's wand towards some new object, he broke forth with fresh objections as violent and loud, and the company quietly stole away at an early hour.

We, who have lived later, have seen that Mr. Minto Morgan continued, but in vain,

to invite mankind to be happy in villages; and when the Church of England remained deaf and cold, even made a journey to interest the Pope in his plan; and that Mr. Silk Buckingham actually, at a later period, did memorialize Government for a grant of the New Forest, but with the like success.

But the circumstance that more than all others interested Philip before his departure on his great mission to the country, and which most helped to divert his thoughts from his own private unhappiness, was a drive which he made with Cobbett in his gig down to his farm. The more he saw of that sturdy advocate for reform, the more he admired the clearness of his views on social cardinal points, and the indomitable energy with which he enforced them. He threw the whole of his robust and impulsive nature into them. But Philip soon began to perceive that his horizon, though clear, was in many respects a very confined one. He had his

crotchets and prejudices, as strong and rampant as his more correct views. He appeared to Philip's wondering eyes like an old English oak, strong and tough as the veriest forest trunk that ever grew, but overgrown and distorted by the most rough and gnarled excrescences. He was regularly embossed with prejudices. It was amazing with what virulence he denounced education, paper-money, tea, potatoes, and all the social refinements. He scoffed at everything like domestic luxury, with a violence of language that made even decency look hideous. He had risen from the plough, and from carrying a musket in the ranks, and he had no notion of the prosperity of the working-classes consisting in anything but in feeding and working like their own plough-horses. All his ideas of the felicity of the masses were physical; the labourer, to his fancy, ought to be nothing but a stout plodding animal, well fed on bread, beef, and beer,

growing the largest cabbages, and having the fattest geese on the common, going to church as his father had done, and dying quietly in his bed when he could toil no longer.

As they drove down the country, he never ceased his diatribes against bank-notes, the wishy-washy slop called tea, the contemptible and expensive "tea-tackle," the crimes and oppressions of the manufacturers, whom he styled "the lords of the loom, the crabbed-voiced, sordid, hard-favoured, hard-hearted, puffed-up, insolent, savage, and bloody wretches of the North." Against Parson Malthus, Methodist parsons; against "Pitt's false money, Peel's flimsy dresses, Wilberforce's potato-diet, Castlereagh's and Mackintosh's oratory, Walter Scott's poems, Walter's and Stoddart's paragraphs, with all the bad taste and baseness and hypocrisy which they had spread over this country."

Nothing broke the stream of his invective except the sight of a fine herd of cows, or a

fat pig at a cottage door, when he would draw up, and commend and admire with all the fondness of an amateur.

On his farm he showed Philip, with incessant delight, all his crops of Swedes and mangel-wurzel, his fat pigs, geese fed on waste lettuces, ducks which he kept carefully out of the water, which he declared did them a deal of harm. He vaunted the fittings-up of his farm-house, with all his plates, dishes, and mugs of pewter or wood. Anything, he declared, was better than crockery-ware. Bottles, he contended, should only be of wood; he did not know what business glass or earthenware had in any man's house, unless he was fond of breakage, and paying two-thirds of the value of his glass in taxation.

Occasionally he left off to laugh, till his sides shook at Philip's account of a breakfast that he took with Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, at Hunt's Hotel in Bouverie Street.

"*Mistress* Hunt!" exclaimed Cobbett.

"*Mistress* Hunt! what, did you call her *Mrs.* Hunt? Why, she's no more Mrs. Hunt than I am; she's only his fine flashy concubine!"

Every now and then the idea of Philip calling "the lady," as she was termed, Mrs. Hunt, tickled him into a fresh outburst, and he only seemed to forget it in beholding what he seemed to think the grandest and most edifying spectacle that the country had exhibited for years. This was a lad of *six* years of age helping his father to reap. The father had set the lad to try his hand at a distance by himself, where Cobbett and Philip found him with a sheaf already cut.

Cobbett was transported at the sight.

"Is not that a true English scene, now?" he exclaimed, gazing on the sturdy urchin with the fondness of a father. "To see a boy fit to be trusted with so dangerous a thing as a reap-hook in his hands, at an age when 'young masters' have nursery-maids to cut

their victuals for them, and see that they do not fall out of the window, tumble down stairs, or run under carriage-wheels, or horses' bellies? Is not this father now discharging his duty by this boy, much better than he would have been by sending him to a place called a *school?* The boy," he added, "is in a school here, and an excellent school too—the school of useful labour. I must hear a great deal more than I ever have heard, to convince me that teaching children to *read* tends so much to their happiness, their independence of spirit, their manliness of character, as teaching them to *reap*."

Philip thought that reading and reaping would have been much better combined, and that the father was a very careless man to leave such a child at a distance with so dangerous a weapon, and might very well expect to find him with two or three fingers less in awhile; but he took care not to say so, and the vigorous, combative politician was so delighted

with the sight, that he noted it down carefully for his book on "Cottage Economy."

But whilst they were sitting at dinner, there walked up to the house and sent in his name, written on a piece of paper, "Grooby Blunt, a Leicestershire farmer, who wishes to see William Cobbett."

"Send him in," said Cobbett, without rising; and presently appeared a large ruddy-faced man of nearly fifty, apparently in the sober garb of a Quaker.

"How art thou, Friend Cobbett?" asked the unceremonious stranger, advancing towards him and offering his hand.

"Quite hearty," replied Cobbett, rising and shaking the Friend's hand, "and glad to see you at Botley." Cobbett had not then taken his violent offence at the Friends, dubbing them a "buttonless and unbaptized generation," and coupling them always with Jews.

"As a farmer," he said, "you are welcome to a farmer's fare. Sit down, Mr. Blunt," he

added, after another glance at the paper he had in his hand.

"I thank thee, Friend Cobbett," replied the Leicestershire farmer, and, seating himself with the utmost composure, continued :—

"I have long wanted to see thy farming, thy Indian corn and American trees, thy fat pigs and fine cattle, on which thou descants so much, like a true lover of agriculture."

"You shall see them all," continued the bucolic politician; "but first taste some of my own raised beef, and tell me whether Leicestershire can produce finer;" and with that he heaped a plate from the noble sirloin before him. "Here, Nancy," he said to his daughter, who was waiting and acting the part of a servant, on the principle of making her useful, "fill the gentleman's glass with some of our best ale."

By-the-bye, the great political agitator had not indulged Philip in a drop of the wishy-washy stuff, tea, since he came into his house,

but milk and oatmeal porridge, and beef and beer to breakfast, and at tea-time beef and beer, and bread and cheese, with ripe gooseberries and strawberries.

"But what do I see?" exclaimed Friend Blunt, with a merry twinkle in his grey eye. "William Cobbett eating potatoes! Why, I thought thou had been denouncing those unfortunate roots as not fit for human food."

"Yes," replied Cobbett, continuing to devour the fine mealy potatoes with evident gusto; "but not with a piece of beef like this. I denounce them as improper food for the poor, and especially for the Irish, who can't get meat. It is because the Irish can exist, and but exist, on potatoes, that they are slaves. On beef and potatoes they would have rebelled long ago."

"There may be something in that," replied the Friend; "but now let us out, and see the farm."

They went on from field to field. They strode over potatoes, mangel-wurzel, traversed plantations of young trees, and fields of young corn; they handled cattle in the field, criticized pigs in the sty, and poultry in the yard. The shrewd Friend put many questions, made many remarks, but none which expressed an opinion one way or another, till at length Cobbett asked :—

"Well now, Mr. Blunt, can Leicestershire beat Botley?"

"Out and out!" said the Friend.

"What!" exclaimed Cobbett; "can you show me such stock, such tillage, such crops in your country?"

"Ay, can we, and much better. To be plain with thee, William Cobbett, thou farms better on paper than I could, but I'd undertake any day to farm twice as well on mother earth herself. But I'm glad to have seen what thou can show. It's like all amateur farming that I've ever seen."

"Amateur farming!" exclaimed Cobbett; "and pray what's amiss with it?"

"William Cobbett," replied the Friend, "dost thou call this ploughing?" pointing to what had appeared even to Philip's eyes very rough and slovenly work, though he had not ventured to say so. "That would be far enough off the prize at a Leicestershire agricultural meeting. And the dressing of those mangel-wurzel ridges, and the weedy potato ground, full of couch and goosetongue; and that grass-land, blue with cold water, and rushy from want of draining; and those turnips, howed as if by a herd of swine, rather than by a skilled field-labourer—but the fact is, William Cobbett, thou tells such lies in thy paper—I could not have believed it."

Philip expected to see the irate agitator knock down even the peaceable Quaker—peaceable in principle, but most uncomplimentary in practice; but what was his astonishment to see the great oracle of re-

form and farming set his burly back against a tree, and burst into a roar of the most side-shaking laughter. Cobbett was diverted by the plain speaking of the Leicestershire Friend—set it all down to sheer envy; did not believe a word of it, and continued to think himself the prince of farmers, and his visitor a most amusing specimen of professional egotism.

Philip, however, was now satisfied that the Friend was right; for every word that he said confirmed his own silent opinion, that he had seen much more admirable farming in every respect. "But," added he to himself, "it is a healthy taste for a writer and politician, bringing him out of the smoky, noisy tumult of London, and into the soothing and purifying influences of nature."

CHAPTER XI.

The time was now come for Philip to set out on his great political expedition. He had a liberal salary, his expenses were also allowed on a liberal scale, and Sir Francis and the Major instructed him to inculcate on this first journey rather the general necessity for every man uniting to urge the great question of parliamentary reform, than to enter into minute modes of action or principles to be established. Universal suffrage, they observed, was the popular cry. They themselves were not prepared for so large a measure, not for going beyond household suffrage

till education had very much further advanced and qualified men to understand their duty as well as their rights, and to discern their true friends from their enemies in disguise. But that the universal suffrage demand might by them be safely conceded, for it would be many a day before they obtained a much less dividend of that right. Therefore, they and Cobbett had publicly yielded to the demand, though they inwardly retained their own opinions; and that point might be tacitly allowed by Philip.

The next day saw him on his way to Northampton. A week ago, how joyous would have been that journey! The very task he had coveted lay under his hand; the very field of his proudest ambition lay before him. It was the glorious mellow month of August, when the air was full of life and warmth, and the people were out in the fields cutting down the golden plenty of Providence. But the stone of a cold despair lay at his heart.

The letter of Helen Freemantle had dashed every feeling of youthful buoyancy from his mind. No answer came to his impassioned reply; the old impenetrable embargo lay again on the communication with his late, but now forfeited friends. So heavily did this sense of his abandonment press on him, that his last act before leaving his room was to fling himself on his knees, and pray to God that, if it were his will his life should be like his father's, barren, solitary, and splintery with crags of adversity, he might have strength to endure it as he had done, and that at least benefit to others might be his recompense. He went forth now with the settled feeling that such was the career before him, and that it was his true wisdom to look for nothing in the future for himself but the hope of raising some fairer fruits for others from the bitter soil of his own experience.

The active duties which now engaged him quickly drew his thoughts happily from him-

self. He had with him a list of all the leading reformers in every town and district, furnished by the Hampden Club, and letters to the chief of them from Cobbett, Sir Francis and the Major, as well as from Mr. Hunt, and others from Thomas Cleary to the secretaries of the different branch clubs, with whom his constant correspondence had created intimacy —for besides his writing to them he had several times had to go down amongst them, and assist them in organizing their clubs.

No sooner, therefore, did he present himself in Northampton to the secretary of the Hampden Club there, than he was received with an enthusiastic delight which acted like a cordial on his spirits. The secretary was a master-shoemaker—not such a one as you find in country towns in general, employing half-a-dozen or dozen men, but some hundreds, who all worked at their own homes, and brought their work in every Saturday, which was paid for, and the shoes and boots

stowed away in the warehouse for the general market.

Northampton's great trade is that of shoes, made in wholesale manufacture for the general and also for the foreign market. Great dealers in London took off vast quantities, and sent them all over the country, and to our colonies abroad. Great numbers of all sorts and sizes went out to the West Indies, to America, and to the Cape.

The secretary of the Hampden Club was a wealthy master, employing numbers of hands; he was, moreover, a leading dissenter, and a man of great influence amongst the working-classes. He at once insisted that Philip, whose fame had reached him and his colleagues in reform in all its glow, should leave the inn, and take up his quarters at his house.

A porter was immediately dispatched to fetch his portmanteau and great-coat from the coach inn, and the worthy master-shoe-

maker sallied forth to introduce the travelling secretary of the general Hampden Club to his fellow-reformers. Most of them were men in the same trade, more or less men of substance, who all received Philip with the greatest heartiness and respect.

He had been expected, and as he went along the streets with two or three of the leading reformers from place to place, numbers of working shoemakers in their leather aprons and their shirt sleeves, who nodded with a sort of familiar respect to their masters, seemed to open their eyes with an eager curiosity at the sight of Philip, and turned round to gaze at him.

"That's the new orator, depend!" they said to one another, and the news flew from street to street with wonderful celerity.

The secretary, having introduced Philip to some dozen of the club, declared it his dinner-hour, one o'clock, and led Philip away, asking a number of the leading men to meet

them to tea at his house at five o'clock, to consult on a plan of movement.

Philip found his new friend leading the way, not to his place of business, but to a handsome villa in the outskirts, with its ample grounds in front, its neatly kept gravel carriage drive, and its pleasant green meadows below, skirted by the clear waters of the Nen. The man was evidently wealthy; the inside of the house bore out the idea. It was substantially and even ostentatiously furnished. The carpets were of the richest and most nicely kept character. The papers on the walls, the curtains of the windows, all seemed as if they had been only just hung, and had not contracted a single soil. The furniture, of solid mahogany and rosewood in the drawing-room, the gilt looking-glasses and popular prints in maple frames, with here and there a painting, thought to have considerable pretensions; the stoves and fire-irons of the brightest burnished steel,

the very poker polished to its point, with a deputy-poker lying by it to do its actual duty—all bespoke not only a lavish outlay, but a care in the use which marked the owner's pride in them.

The lady of the house was as smart and spotless in appearance as the abode. She received Philip, who was introduced to her as the great orator, Mr. Stanton, with a countenance that at once was covered with smiles and blushes, and with a curtsey of profound respect, and began to apologize for not knowing of his coming to dinner, but hoping that he would excuse their plain fare.

She informed her husband that dinner had been sometime waiting, and, therefore, the worthy host hurried Philip upstairs to wash his hands. On his return he was led into a dining-room, where were already two or three boys and girls of from eight to twelve years of age, who sat down with them. The table was covered with a snow-white cloth, and

the plate and dinner-service were worthy of a nobleman's board.

The dinner was plain but excellent, and during its discussion a hundred questions were put to Philip about the movement in London, and the great men at the head of it. He himself was complimented on his brilliant oration, which, he was assured, had not only been read in the London papers, but had been copied into theirs, and reprinted on separate sheets, and sent into all the villages and towns around. He was congratulated on his living amongst such distinguished men in London, and every little anecdote of them was caught up as a bit of a new revelation, and commented upon with wonder, and, it was evident, would be detailed with all avidity. He saw that nothing would be so easy for him as to play the lion; nothing so hard as to avoid it. If he had any vanity, he might gratify it to his soul's content; if he had any caution, he must

be prepared to use it—for whatever dropped from his mouth would be carried off and promulgated through a thousand channels as so many oracles.

But whilst the worthy master-shoemaker and his wife were admiringly repeating interesting things about Sir Francis and Cobbett, the Major and Mr. Hunt, and observing, with faces full of delight, "How grand that was now of the great Sir Francis!"—and the other, "Really, how very original was that remark of Cobbett's!"—and a dozen little ears were drinking in the wondrous story, two or three of the leading reformers were seen hurrying up to the house, and the host and hostess, with their guest, adjourned to the drawing-room to meet them.

They came to say that the celebrated secretary's arrival was known all over the town, and the people were impatient to hear him, and a meeting was proposed at seven o'clock in the evening.

As Philip's business was to meet and encourage the reformers, it was at once decided upon. The only difficulty was as to accommodating all that would want to attend. The times were such that no permission could be obtained from the authorities for a meeting in the open air, nor would the town-hall be granted for anything so radical as Hampden Club-men and supporters of Burdett and Cobbett. Neither would any of the dissenters lend their chapels; the only place, therefore, which could be made available was a large empty, warehouse, that was used for such purposes.

The messengers hurried away to make preparations. There needed no crier to announce the meeting, much less posting of hand-bills; the news flew from house to house, and all the labourdom of Northampton was agog for the hour of seven. At five the leaders invited to tea appeared, and Philip was greatly pleased and cheered by the zeal and

sound sense which animated the conversation of the reformers. There seemed an honest simplicity, a homely heartiness in the cause, which struck him as much more attractive than the tone of politicians in London. There was a fresh country air about these men, and a sympathy with the sufferings of the labouring-class, which seemed independent of their own interests. And yet their interests were deeply involved. They drew lamentable pictures of the distress created by the derangement of trade and the enormous cost of provisions, owing to the corn-laws, and the prohibition of the import of cattle and other commodities from abroad; and the assertions that some great change must be forced from the Government seemed to come from them as from men that must and would be heard.

As the hour approached, Philip was escorted to the meeting by a considerable band of more leading men, who had kept flocking in;

and when they approached the place of meeting, they beheld a dense crowd collected around a flight of steps that led to the upper story of a long old building. Way was made for the orator and his attendants through the press, amid whirling hats and stunning hurrahs. He turned at the top of the steps, and bowed to the crowd outside, who replied to the compliment with still louder hurrahs, and cries of "Stanton and reform for ever!"

When he looked into the long room, it was one dense mass of people, who rose and received him with a demonstration as energetic and resounding. Way was opened for him to advance to a platform at the further end of the room, but he stopped short near the door, and, motioning for silence, proposed to address them from the place where he was, that those outside might also hear.

"Hear! hear!" was shouted, and at once there was a most extraordinary scene of com-

motion, through the whole company stepping over the benches, so as to sit facing him. This done, a large packing-case was brought from below for him to stand upon, and the leaders took their seats around him.

Philip was so placed, that from the doorway he could be heard by the eager crowd below as well as by that in the room, without its being said to be an open-air meeting.

A few words from his host, the master-shoemaker, explained that Mr. Stanton had come express from the London Reform Association, to encourage the spirit of reform, and he begged them to be as silent as possible, that they might all hear him.

A silence, sudden and profound, instantly succeeded; and Philip felt that most trying moment to a young orator, when new to the habit of addressing large bodies, and hundreds are waiting for his words. In the meeting in London he had sprung forward in the heat of excitement, and scarcely knowing what

he did; but here he was haunted by the feelings of his responsibility, and the necessity of maintaining a great reputation, won in a second of time.

He began in a somewhat low and faltering tone; his ideas seemed to flee away instead of coming at his command, and he felt himself in that painful predicament called floundering. An awful sensation was creeping over him, when, catching the eager, pale expression of the faces, and the hungering, suffering light of the eyes that hung on his lips as for salvation, he was struck with the world of woe and oppression which he was come out to do battle for, and at once all personal feelings vanished. The sense of the human sorrow and calamity which in the souls around him represented the wretchedness of a nation, became the only sense within him, and, breaking into the midst of the great idea, he exclaimed:—

"My friends! what a misery weighs on

us! And shall this misery continue? Shall we toil only for starvation? Shall we labour only for woe? Is this the only heritage for industrious England? Is this all that we have fought for? All that we have wove and spun and hammered, and prayed for? Is this all that our wise men discover for us? Is this all that our Government can give us?"

He had touched the tender spot in every soul, the ache in every heart. There was a response in a thunder of outcries and confused sounds of expressive recognition, and the spirit of the young man was at once in the full stream of his oration. His words came, as it were, unbidden from his breast, and with a vivid, lightning-like tone that was new to his hearers. He described what he had seen in other parts of the country, the calamity and destitution which were the sole reward of a people who had fought and bled for the world. The hard, unflinching spirit of the rulers, the necessity for the whole

nation to unite in one great struggle for regeneration of the constitution. His mission, at present, was only to kindle the zeal of his hearers, without leading them beyond the law, and he succeeded beyond all conception.

The whole of his hearers, within and without, were thrown into a state of the highest excitement. His speech was continually interrupted by exclamations and stamping, which seemed as though they would never cease, and when he had ceased the wildest cries of "Bravo! hurrah! that is the truth!—that is the man for us!—that is the Man of the People come at last," continued to resound. The leaders who surrounded him sprung up and shook his hands both at the same time, expressing their thanks and admiration in enthusiastic words. There were more than one of them who had wept like children, and one stout old man in a corner had stood with a red handkerchief over his head to hide his emotions. The

people came rushing towards him to shake hands with him, whilst the rest behind cried out, "Move on! move on! don't keep us here!" impatient to come up to him.

Philip seized his hat and hastened downstairs, where he was again surrounded by the crowd, as by a swarm of bees; and it was long before his friends could succeed in getting him away. The throng still poured after him to the very gates of his host's house, and did not leave till they had been earnestly exhorted to do so by the leading men, and then went off with a round of deafening cheers.

When Philip found himself in the house, he perceived that the heat of the room and his own excitement rendered it as necessary that he should change his dress as if he had been plunged into the river. When he came down to supper, he found the company still in the most enthusiastic condition.

Nothing like that speech, they declared, had ever been heard in Northampton, nor had

anything that they had read of the speeches of Canning, or Grey, or Holland, or any of the great parliamentary orators, ever seemed to them so overpowering. The voices in the meeting were right—Mr. Stanton was the Man of the People. He was destined to do wonders for the cause of reform, and "The Man of the People" was drunk with three times three.

It was late before the guests dispersed, and Philip was destined to listen to a series of table speeches, which, if they did not equal his own in eloquence, surpassed it in eulogies.

The next day the club met, and the state of the reform question in the neighbourhood was discussed, and plans laid for extending the field of operations. Philip was driven out to meet the reformers of different villages, and everywhere his presence excited the utmost respect. He could not move in the town without zealous reformers rushing out and greeting him. In a few days two or

three of the chief men accompanied him to Market Harborough, where a similar display took place. Then he went on to Leicester and Loughborough, amongst the hosiers and stocking-weavers, where his fame had preceded him, and the marvellous effects of his address at Northampton had created the intensest expectations. In these places the excitement was the same. All declared that a new star had risen on the horizon of reform—the most eloquent and undaunted orator of the age was developed in Philip Stanton. Thence Philip proceeded to Hinckley, Warwick, and Birmingham. At this large and busy place the excitement was so great, that it was determined to brave the anger of the magistrates, and hold an open-air meeting on a moorland outside of the town. There Philip beheld a new scene. Thousands upon thousands of smutty artisans in their working-dress were, as the time approached, streaming towards the spot, though

no handbills nor public announcements had been issued, lest the authorities should interfere and take possession of the ground before them.

When Philip and some of the leading reformers came on the scene, there were at least ten thousand men assembled, who were so densely packed round a waggon, which was to be the rostrum, that when the chaise containing Philip drove up, followed by some other carriages, the sound with which they were received was like the roar of the ocean; and when Philip scaled the waggon, and stood aloft before them, with some of the reformers with him, the mass of bared heads, above which were whirling violently agitated hats and caps, looked like one gigantic brush.

We shall not attempt to describe the scene which ensued. Philip, as if inspired by the greatness of the assembly, exceeded himself. His mind seemed to grasp, with a new and generalizing power, all the substantial topics

and questions of national reform; and the acute Birmingham politicians, accustomed to discuss and analyze all these matters, were stirred by his fervid and masterly treatment of them to the highest pitch.

The vast assembly streamed back after the carriages towards the town, in busy discussion of the address, like a huge hive of bees in the fermentation of an approaching swarming. There were numbers of constables, some of the great manufacturers, and more than one magistrate observed in the throng, but the orderly conduct of the multitude gave no plea for any interference. But the alarm amongst the Tory, and even the moderate Whig class, was intense.

The next day the Tory newspapers resounded with the fiercest diatribes against the orator and his party. A new fire-brand, it was said, was sent out by the London revolutionists; the renegade member of a great Conservative family, who, for the poor reward

of the flattery of the unwashed mob, was gone out to scatter sedition and stir up bloodshed throughout the land. The magistrates were bid to look to it, for that a fearful responsibility was upon them—the fate of the nation was in their hands. On the contrary, the reform papers were as loud in their admiration of the new hero. A great orator and statesman—"a burning and shining light"—had arisen, whose voice was all-potent to call every man to his duty towards his country, whilst it admonished them not to violate, but to observe and to cement the law. The great workshop of ironmongery and brass wares was in a glow, fervid as one of its own furnaces.

Philip, after holding private meetings with the reformers and Hampden Clubbists, to extend the organization of the reform agitation, pursued his way to the dismal districts of coal and iron mines—to Wolverhampton, Bilston, Wednesbury, and all that Pandemonium of smoke and shrieking and hissing enginery, of

coal-dust covered men and women, of ragged and bare-legged children. What a scene was this to him, who had only lived in the agricultural districts, with their clean, smooth green fields, their clear skies, and neat villages, and fresh, pure leaves and flowers!

Here he found himself in the midst of scores of miles of country which was literally turned upside-down, and which was one great chaos of fire and smoke, fizzing steam, muddy waters, and heaps of coals and furnace drosses. What a place it appeared for human creatures to pass their whole lives in!

Mile after mile he encountered nothing but huge piles of coal, huge uncouth heaps of dirt and slaty shale and coal dust, amongst which lay, ever and anon, pools of mud rather than water; great smoking and still red-hot masses of many-coloured slags from the iron furnaces, resembling green and streaked and fiery lava. On all sides rose ugly engine-houses and tall chimneys, vomiting out clouds

of blackest, thickest, and sootiest smoke, and grimy poles and posts, over which ran dirty cable-like ropes on wheels, which shrieked, and whirred, and whistled as if a thousand mortal creatures were in penal agonies, and a thousand others deriding their torments.

Amid these were the cabins of the workmen, clustered here and there at considerable distances into a sort of Inferno village, where not a blade of grass, much less a tree, or shrub, or flower was ever seen, except it were some sickly leaves of dingy coltsfoot which grew out of the blue, shaly, and trodden heaps, like some fungus vegetation of a dream.

From these huts peeped out miserable-looking women and half-naked children, with wild unkempt hair, and faces of the universal coal-dust hue ; and a strange race of uncouth-looking men, in grimed smocks, and trousers of flannel and slouching hats, brown and

battered, were at work amongst the Cimmerian chaos; or lingering about, propping themselves against some old stump or fragment of stone wall. Where a glimpse of country intervened, what a country! The hedges half dead, full of wild rents—here hedges, there none, covered with an incrustation of soot, a tree struggling for life against its melancholy destiny, a deep, muddy ditch, made more hideous by the carcass of dead dog or cat; sheep black as soot itself, a few cattle as sooty, the very grass grim with smoke, and clouds of smoke eternally rolling through the air! Such were regions through which Philip wandered in ever-augmenting amazement. "And this, then," he said, "is the scene from which we receive the luxuries of our fires, and the thousand manufactured articles of steel which give comfort and ornament to our abodes. In the subterranean shades to which these yawning gulphs descend, our fellow-men toil in darkness and

danger for our own advantage, and we make their lives still bitterer by sending famine amongst them by our laws.

And miserable as these regions appeared to him, he soon found that their native deformity was two-fold aggravated by the state of the times. Trade was stagnant; numbers of pits and furnaces were standing still. Thousands of men were out of work, and were in a state of desperation from starvation. They would not give a thought to all these discomforts, amongst which, to Philip, they seemed to live, could they only get their daily hard-earned wages; but when those miserable huts, in which there was little more than a stool or two, a fire-place, and a wretched bed, were the dens of hunger, of drooping wives and children, only made quiet by exhaustion, then they became sullen and dangerous, and menaced destitution to those who were better off than themselves. Nothing, he soon discovered, had been done to diffuse a

consolatory hope and knowledge amongst this outer darkness; ignorance the most profound reigned, and many had never heard of Christ or the Bible.

These miserable creatures were, however, still alive to the voice of kindness. They hastened from all sides to listen to Philip's harangues, and to the news that there were men of high estate and talent who were doing all in their power to bring about better times for them. Philip's sympathizing addresses and tones had the most powerful effect on them; and it would have been a singular sight to a stranger to see a handsome and gentlemanly young man mounted on a heap of coals in huge blocks, or of glass-like slag, amid that dismal scenery and machinery, addressing some thousands of colliers, men, women, and children, as black and wild as their environments. Yet, down the grimed cheeks of many a stalwart collier or foundryman the tears would be rolling,

washing their tracks in lines that showed that there was fairer flesh as well as soft hearts beneath. And many were the blessings which the weeping women, with their aprons to their eyes, called down on the head of the good young gentleman who thought it worth while to come and speak comforting words to such as they.

From these coal and iron districts Philip pursued his way, in obedience to instructions from head-quarters, to the Staffordshire potteries.

It was dark on a night towards the end of August when he approached this populous neighbourhood, on the top of the coach, and he seemed to be only exchanging one strange vicinity for another. A fine and fertile country had brought him from Stafford to the princely hall and encircling woods and meadows of Trentham, the seat of the Duke of Sutherland, which he could dimly descry as he passed, when suddenly before him, through

the gloom of night, he beheld fires flickering and lights gleaming, some aloft as on mountain summits, and some deep below. He imagined that he must be in a really mountainous region, on the tops and sides of whose steeps, and deep beneath, in gulfs as profound, a race of miners and smiths were driving their trades, and kindling their forges and their furnaces. A strong odour of smoke, mingled with a metallic flavour, assailed his nostrils, and presently the coach began to enter on streets and lanes of houses, dingy, and of no very beautiful aspect. Anon, he was set down at the "Stafford Arms," a goodly coach inn, at Stoke; and the next morning, after breakfast, he sallied forth to take a look at the mountains so studded with fires over night. Instead of mountains, he found himself in a wilderness of smoking brick houses, interspersed, as far as the eye could reach, with great brick furnaces, resembling in shape old-fashioned bulbous-sided decanters, and with

still taller chimneys of china-factories. Having paid his bill, and sent on his portmanteau to Hanley, he walked up towards the heart of this land of crockery. The place was far less dismal than those which he had left. At distances he could see that there too coal-mines and smoke had defaced the landscape. The hedges and trees wore the same stunted, grimed, and persecuted aspect. The fields appeared ill-drained, rushy, and slovenly, except some plots nearer to the highway. The features of the country had originally been pleasant, with hill and dale; afar off he could actually catch a prospect of blue and airy heights, and heather still showing its brown and crimson hues of the wilderness. But all near was a vast congregation of houses, all of smoking brick, and the majority of them rows of workmen's tenements, here and there interspersed, but at considerable distances, with a brick palace, the abode of the wealthy master potter, with its great china factory near it, and be-

hind it its gardens, stables, and green-house. The roads were made of broken pots, the waste places were covered with heaps of broken pots —the very walls of gardens and road-side fields were made of great pots—which he found were called seggars, a corruption of safeguards, being the great coarse pots in which the finer wares were baked to prevent injury from the irregular drafts of the furnace.

On and on Philip walked wondering, through these singular streets, which extend over a length of some ten miles, by two or three wide, and where 100,000 people or more are engaged in manufacturing pots of all kinds.

Hanley, the part at which he was aiming, presented a somewhat superior aspect, though still of the same character. Here was a spacious market-place ; here were good shops, and a good inn. On the way, he had passed several remarkably large chapels; and, by the innumerable placards posted on the dead walls, he had discovered that it was a place which

abounded with almost every species of dissenters, who seemed to live in a perpetual anxiety to attract you to their Ebenezers. Sermons were to be preached, or had been preached, by noted men of different churches and creeds, on all imaginable occasions; and yet fresh occasions were presenting themselves, for still fresh placards of enormous dimensions announced fresh attractions to the connoisseurs in pulpit eloquence. Men in jackets of a mealy hue, and with long white aprons, were going about, presenting a great contrast to the natives of the mines.

But through this usually busy hive of industry the same causes had struck the same blight of stagnation and distress. Trade languished, thousands were out of work, and the terrible price of provisions added to the general sufferings. There had been great gatherings of the unemployed, and menaces, neither low nor gentle, had been uttered by the hungry masses, now grown desperate. The

magistrates, in alarm, had sworn in a great number of special constables, and the neighbouring troops of yeomen cavalry had been ordered to be in readiness for any emergency. The news that the great incendiary, as Philip was now called, was coming thither had flown before him; and the leading reformers, though they received him cordially, told him that it would be most hazardous to hold any meetings more numerous than their clubs.

But the masses had caught the intelligence of his approach, and soon called on him to address them. Philip saw that there needed no stimulus applying to their already irritated minds, but he deemed it very necessary to give them an idea of where their true strength lay, namely, in seeking redress by moral means. He consented, therefore, to run any risks for this purpose, and accordingly, first on one wild spot of ground, then on another, now at Bucknall, now at Tunstal, now at Lone-End, and in the fields midway betwixt Shelton

and Newcastle, might be seen thousands of these white-aproned artisans assembled to listen to him. Then he told them that not they only, but the whole poor of the kingdom, and thousands of their employers, were suffering from the same cause—the enormous expenditure of the war, the consequent monstrous weight of taxation, and the exclusion of the staff of life. But he warned them that any resort to physical force would only add to their evils; that they could no more contend with the army of England than they could command those millions of potsherds to become wheaten bread. Everything here was to be won by union—firm, universal, indissoluble union—for the demand of reform in Parliament and the abolition of the bread-tax. This was the first time that Philip had had occasion to urge moral suasion in opposition to force, and there arose some murmurs; but his warm and powerful reasoning was triumphant over this, and elicited the same enthu-

siasm as it had everywhere done. Besides speaking in public, he met them in private and at their clubs, and conversed with them so kindly and sympathizingly that he won their hearts altogether. He impressed on them the fact that they had zealous and able friends in London, and that, with unanimity and perseverance, success was certain

The progress of Philip to this point had been most triumphant. A great fame had gone abroad of him. His speeches at every place were forwarded to London, copied into the metropolitan papers, and awoke the utmost admiration. He received from the heads of the Central Hampden Club, from Sir Francis, Cobbett, the Major, and others, the most enthusiastic approbation of his labours. Into every quarter of the country his eloquent appeals to the people, to unite in the one great object, had flown like wildfire, and had been discussed with equal animation in the work-shop, the field, and the halls of the great.

To one he was become the star of hope—to the other class, the baleful comet of menaced revolution. True, not a revolutionary word had issued from his lips, or found a place in his bosom. His exhortation was to constitutional order, union, and, through that, to a peaceful victory over oppressive laws. But, to the aristocracy, that was the worst species of revolution, for it was one which they could not assail by the bayonet, whilst it threatened to do all that they dreaded—to free corn, to reduce rents, and to reconquer to the people their own house of legislature, which, once in their hands, would cure all reckless taxation, and put down a thousand sorts of licence under which they groaned, but by which their oppressors flourished.

Therefore, peremptory orders were issued from Downing Street to all corporations, magistrates, and lord-lieutenants to keep the yeomanry and constabulary in prompt readiness, to keep down all gatherings of the dis-

contented, and to mark such as played the demagogue to lead the people into mischief. Philip saw that he was especially aimed at; in fact, he was universally hailed as the Man of the People, and regarded with the deepest jealousy by the landed and wealthy classes. No such rousing effect had been produced on the people at large, not even by Cobbett's masculine "Register," for years, as by the speeches and labours of Philip Stanton, during the short space of two months.

CHAPTER XII.

It was at this moment, when Philip was about to go on into Lancashire, amid its great and populous towns, in compliance with numerous urgent invitations, that the London Committee desired him to turn back to Nottingham, where a great demonstration was about to be made. Philip listened to the call with delight. To Nottingham, his dear friend, Lawrence Hyde, had now gone from his charge at Slumbercumb. He longed of all things to see him, and to enjoy a little relaxation, if it were only for a few weeks, in his society.

As Philip rolled along on the top of the Highflyer coach from Derby to Nottingham, on a fine September day, he was greatly charmed with the country. There was a pleasant, home-like look about it. Old halls, old-fashioned villages, pleasant farms, studded with white flocks and various-coloured cattle, stubble fields, in which the sportsman was calling to his dogs to keep within bounds, were the objects that flitted past; while the fine vale of the Trent stretched along at his right hand, with its distant banks hung with woods, and its broad expanse of meadows catching the eye ever and anon. As he came near Nottingham, the castle on its lofty rock boldly struck his eye; and the fine Elizabethan mansion of Wollaton, the seat of Lord Middleton, standing in its airy park, on his left, greatly charmed him. At every step were villas of the wealthy townsmen in their neatly kept shrubberies, luxuriant with evergreens, enlivening the road-side; and the town,

stretching far right and left, with its masses of clean red brick houses, and the well-dressed people walking, and children playing, on the slopes of the old Nottingham Park, denoted a place of much substantial wealth, and of a population conscious of the amenities of their locale. In a few minutes more they were descending a pretty steep hill, which threw nearly the whole populous town under the eye. The mass of roofs, broken up by various church spires, and the great solid tower of St. Mary's, claiming a respectful attention on account of its distant elevation amid its sea of houses; hills in the background on the left, and the distant grey Trent bridge spanning the river on the right, presented as imposing a spectacle of an English seat of industry, amid its smiling environs, as can be well conceived. Anon they were driving along its noble market-place, unequalled for extent and for the character of its houses and shops by any town in the kingdom. A long

colonnade supported those on the left hand, in front of which the coach drove, recalling a feeling of a day left far behind; and a large building called the Exchange, but containing the official chambers of the corporation, stretched its white front nearly across the lower end. There was an air of brightness, cleanness, and of activity in the number of people passing about, which particularly struck Philip, new from the smoky potteries, and the still more grimy districts of the Warwickshire collieries. He did not wonder that Lawrence Hyde preferred so agreeable a place to the solitary desolation of Waterdale.

The coach suddenly drew up at an archway of the colonnade, which Philip found was called the Long Row, and deposited its passengers, such as were not of this place, at the Black Boy, an inn occupying the yard into which they entered.

Philip, having despatched his dinner, and washed and brushed off his travel-dust, set

out to inquire his way to the residence of Lawrence at Snenton, where he was curate. He found himself directed past the great church of St. Mary, through a part of the town lying in a hollow, with wharves and warehouses, and then pointed to a group of houses on a range of low sand rock before him. As he approached this elevated knoll, on which stood the required village of Snenton, fast growing into union with the town, he was much struck with the appearance of the gardens and orchards hanging their boughs and their thickets of wild roses over the sand rock, and with caverns and dwellings scooped out of these cliffs. There was even a public-house excavated in them, with the attractive sign of the Traveller's Rest, and its chimneys just reaching the top of them, the smoke seeming to emerge from the ground. The tavern front was of all sorts of building, but of no sort of architecture, old, seeming to hang in the air rather than to stand on the

earth, with windows of all kinds and sizes, except modern ones, or handsome ones, or very great ones; there was at once an air of antiquity and of tea-garden stamp about the place, but of a vagabondish grade.

Philip ascended a narrow path betwixt tall hawthorn hedges, leading to the top of the cliff, and after proceeding some way, puzzled by various doors in the tall hedges closely shutting in the gardens and cottages within them, he found, by direction of an old man loading an ass with besoms at one of the doors, the abode of the curate. Having entered at the door, he stood in pleased astonishment. The place was one charming garden, half lawn and flower borders, half kitchen-garden; but the whole of it more or less an orchard, on the boughs of which hung loads of apples, pears, and plums. In the centre stood a real old-fashioned cottage of frame-work and plaster, evidently very old, but well preserved. The roof was of thatch, half-a-yard

in thickness; and by its walls, and under different trees, were seats, simple benches, which showed that the occupiers enjoyed the *al fresco* of such a nest with befitting gusto.

Philip had to walk round to the front, which faced towards the cliff, not far from the edge of which it stood, and overlooked the magnificent expanse of meadow for which the Trent is famous. Here a rustic porch, with its ample seats also, and its luxuriant mass of hanging jasmines and honeysuckles, shaded the door, from which an elderly woman looked out, and then made a low curtsey to the stranger. Philip inquired if Mr. Hyde were in, and the dame replied that he was out then, but would be in at five o'clock to his tea. Philip said he would call in at that hour, and walked away without leaving his name, intending to give Lawrence a little surprise, for he had not sent him word of his coming.

A mass of fine wood had attracted his eye down the valley, and he walked on that way to occupy the time. It was yet not three o'clock. He soon found himself at the entrance of the wood, where stood a lodge, and the keeper told him the place was Colwick, the seat of Mr. Musters; he might see the hall across the meadow, and that the road was public, and led not only to the hall, but to the village of Colwick.

Philip pursued his way, more than ever charmed with the locality. Steep slopes on his left hand ran up from the bordering wood into a hilly park, and ever and anon a fine green hollow, with its ancient scattered trees, revealed snatches of silvan poetry. Deer and cattle were seen by glimpses amid the steep thickets, and a late thrush still made the brooding silence of autumn musical. He strode on in an Arcadian dream, luxuriating in the pastoral romance of the scenery, and anon found himself in the village, a mere

hamlet of a few scattered well-to-do farm-houses and the substantial rectory. The bees were busy humming around rows of hives in the gardens; there were still beds of old-fashioned and brilliant flowers; and the scent of the garden spurge, and of the box, gave a peculiar odour to the basking air. Lingering, yet still moving on, he entered the meadows, and soon found himself amidst a herd of fat, clean-coated, and Sybaritic cows, with heath milky-sweet as the meadow-sweet flowers still flourishing on the sloping velvet banks of the river. The Trent there was running on clear, translucent, radiant, and peaceful, as it had flowed for ages.

Philip sat down, and dreamed of the blessedness of a life passed in such scenes, tranquil and soft as these waters. The peasant there seemed to him to be envied. For himself, fame had burst suddenly upon him; he felt that a brilliant career, with the

superb gift of eloquence in his possession, was within his grasp—but he coveted it not. At the bottom of his heart lay the stony coldness of crushed affection. A blank, a darkness, a mystery, still lay betwixt him and everything he held dear; and his fate appeared to be to live in the tempest of mental struggles, with no desire but to discharge his duty to his fellow-creatures.

He arose, and turned his steps backward with a quickened impulse. Yes! there was one pleasure left for him—it was to grasp once more the honest hand of the faithful Lawrence. He was hastening along the wood-shaded road through Colwick Park, when he was roused out of his reverie by the loud and busy chirping of birds. It was as if a cloud of linnets, with their rich, musical notes, were flying on towards their roosting-place. He looked up—around—he could see no flock of birds, yet still the chirping, cheerful, busy, happy sound grew nearer. Where could it be?

In another moment he beheld an elderly man and woman sitting on a bank, with no less than four cages with them, filled with the most beautiful canaries.

The man had one between his knees, and was weaving sticks of plantain-seed into the wires, and the woman was busy sticking a lump of sugar betwixt the bars of another.

Philip stood still at this singular sight. The man lifted his hat in token of respect, showing a large bald head, and grey hair in a thick volume falling on his shoulders. He had a ruddy, intelligent face, massy, rounded, and placid features. He was clad in a large blue frock-coat, large striped woollen waistcoat, and appeared approaching sixty years, but of a hale and firm age. The woman—his wife—had all the homely, simple aspect of a respectable cottage dame, with her black bonnet fringed with black lace, and her grey handkerchief pinned over her chest in front.

"Why," said Philip, "you have quite an aviary here. Are you going about to sell birds?"

"No, sir," said the old man; "we don't sell the poor things—we give a few away sometimes to particular friends, when we know they will be well treated. We are only taking them out a little walk. My dame and me thought we should like a bit of a stroll, and it seemed cruel to leave the poor things. Why should not they have a walk sometimes as well as ourselves?"

Philip smiled. The idea was original, and showed an excellent heart in the old people.

"But don't you think," asked Philip, "that if you consult their taste they would like a fly better?"

"Ay, sir, you're right there," said the old man, laughing. "But it would be a cruel kindness to indulge them. I daresay we often ask things as foolish of God, and, therefore, we

don't get them. Don't you see, sir, that the poor things have lived from the eggs dependant on man's providence? They don't know the danger of liberty to them. They would not know where to find their food, for they've always looked for it in the holes of a box, and not on the ground—and for their water in a glass fountain, and not in a river or pool. A few hours, and they would be dreadfully at a loss, and every little spiteful wild bird would be after them, and chase them, and peck them to death. We can only do our best for them."

"Very true," said Philip; "perhaps the only excuse for keeping birds at all is that they are hatched in captivity, and are, therefore, incapable of liberty; but if there be one barbarism more hateful than another to me, it is to see nightingales, that come to us for a season, ruthlessly kidnapped—and larks, that want to soar into the blue sky, cramped in a cage."

"Right, sir, right!" said the old man, with much earnestness. "That is abominable—that is shameful! But what wont men do?—they are just as bad to one another!"

Philip glanced at the old man. "He is a radical, I warrant him," he thought. But as he was about to sound him on that head, the woman laid her hand on her husband's arm quietly, and said:—

"Adam, you munna forget—the curate will want his tea."

Up the old man started, took an old silver watch out of his waistcoat pocket, and said, "Bless us! and it's half-past four." He picked up two of the cages, the wife the others, and they began to walk briskly homewards.

"The curate, you said," remarked Philip; "do you mean Mr. Hyde?"

"Yes, sir," said the woman, both the old people looking with a quick glance at Philip. "We look after his house."

"I have been thinking," added the woman, "that you were the gentleman that called, and said you would come again."

"The same," said Philip, putting his hand familiarly on the old man's shoulder. "Adam Criche, I am delighted to make your acquaintance. My name is Philip Stanton!"

The old man put down his cages in a hurry—his face went as flushed as the sun, just then sinking towards the west over Nottingham—and, clutching at Philip's extended hand, he exclaimed:—

"Philip Stanton! Mr. Stanton! Nay, in Heaven's name!"—he did not finish his sentence, but, turning to the old woman, who stood in astonishment, still holding the cages, and dropping a succession of curtseys, "Mother! dosta hear! It's Mr. Stanton, the great orator! My! what will the curate say?—what will Nottingham say? Bless me! I feel as if an archangel had suddenly dropped out of heaven. It has ta'en my breath and

strength too; but mother! mother! we must make haste!"

Philip smiled at the old man's astonishment; he felt that there was genuine pleasure at his presence, and, asking after the curate's health, and so on, the three strode on at a rapid rate towards Snenton. Philip had heard of Adam Criche from Lawrence. He was a man who had suffered severely for his political principles, but remained a firm maintainer of them. He was the active participator in the cause of reform still. Always ready to promote petitions, to arrange political meetings, to spread sound principles, but to oppose and discourage all violent and unwise measures. Lawrence had declared it a most fortunate thing to have made the acquaintance of the worthy Adam and his wife, by lodging at this cottage, which he now looked upon as his own, in a manner, and they his managers. He had his garden to work in, the cottage was managed for his

especial convenience, and he felt himself under the roof of fast and indefatigable friends. For some time at first the birds rather annoyed him, but they were hung outside the cottage in fair weather, and when he was writing his sermons, or wished to be particularly quiet, if they were inside on account of the weather, Adam kept them as still as mice by throwing a handkerchief over each of the cages.

As the three entered the garden, they saw Lawrence already seated on the bench on the brow of the precipice, enjoying evidently the glorious sunset as it burned and crimsoned all the western sky. Turning at the sound of the closing garden door, he seemed for a moment as if dazzled by the glories he had been gazing on; he did not recognize the stranger who entered with his host and hostess. In the next, he sprung up, and leaping across two or three intervening flower-beds at as many strides, he was at the side of

Philip, and seizing both his hands, exclaimed:—

"Philip! Philip! what an advent! what a gladness!" The two old people stood with smiles and delight in witnessing the joy of the two friends. In the next moment they all entered the lowly door of the house, and Lawrence, bidding Mrs. Criche hasten with the tea, led Philip into his little parlour. It was furnished in the simplest style, with a mat only on the floor, and a few homely prints on the walls, but Lawrence's books gave the unmistakable air of the home of taste and knowledge.

We need not stop to describe the rejoicing of the two friends at their meeting again. Over tea, which was soon served, with nice hot cakes which Mrs. Criche had already baked and placed on the hob, in a dish covered with a cloth, Lawrence recounted the causes of his quitting Waterdale.

It was as he expected—the squire and rector

never liked him after his plain expostulations on the dreadful neglect of the poor in that parish; and had, almost immediately after Philip's leaving, given him notice that they had a successor engaged. Lawrence staid to receive him. He was a young man, who calculated on passing his time chiefly in shooting or fishing while he was there; but was not likely to be very much there, except to perform service on Sundays—for he was of a family which lived some ten miles off, where he purposed really to make his home. As for the school, that was shut up again; no other master had been found willing to undertake it for the salary.

"Poor people!" said Philip.

"Ay, poor people indeed!" added Lawrence; "their case is desperate. I really could not have left them had I not been dismissed, and the sadness with which they took leave of me hung about me for weeks, and I really think I never shall be quite rid of it. 'That

is the finish,' they said; 'it would be better for us to be the sheep or the cattle than what we are, for they are cared for; God help us!'"

"But I trust," said Philip, "you feel more at home here. What a charming, chéerful sort of country this is!"

"Do you like it?" said Lawrence, proudly; "I am very glad of that. Oh! there is no place I like so well. At home! Ay, that is the word! I *am* at home here, and I only wish that you would be so too. But that were too charming. You are grown all at once too great! You are not for a district—you are for the world. It needs you, and will have you. Philip Stanton, what a name, what a fame, what an admiration you have won! When I have read your finished, impassioned, Demosthenean harangues, I could scarcely believe you were the schoolmaster of Slumbercumb. When I have heard your speeches hawked through the streets here, and

seen crowds running with impatience to get them, I have walked on, proudly saying, 'Ah! that is my friend!' Look here!—but you have seen it—you are already in a volume. 'The Celebrated Popular Orations of Philip Stanton, Esq.'"

Philip looked in blushing surprise, but there indeed was a neatly-printed pocket volume published in London, of his speeches delivered at the Crown-and-Anchor, and in his late tour.

"Can they think such trifles worth making a volume of?" said Philip, turning over the leaves.

"Trifles!" said Lawrence; "those are no trifles to the publisher, that sell by tens of thousands. Why, a bookseller here tells me he has already sold two thousand, and has to send every few days for them. They are no trifles, that are stirring the people all over the island to their heart's core. Why, poor Adam here sate and cried over them, and

stopped his wife twenty times in an hour to listen to them, and I really believe would have gone out of his mind if I had not allowed him to read them to me to the very end. And only to think that I have never myself heard you! But I shall do that now. You are announced to appear at the great meeting on the Forest next week. I hope to Heaven, however, the people don't know that you are come yet."

"Not a word of it," said Philip, "I wanted some rest, and some talk with you."

"Mind, though!" exclaimed Lawrence, and he sprang out of the room. When he came back, he said, "I just ran to drop a warning to Adam and his wife. The old man will be so full of it, that, without a hint, he would have it all over the place before the evening was ended; and I want you awhile to myself. I want you to go with me over my favourite walks, and I

want to introduce you to one or two friends, all under the rose."

"That is just what I wish," said Philip; "and as I hope to spend at least some weeks here as my head-quarters, I am anxious to seek out some quiet lodgings in the town, or near it."

"I know of them, said Lawrence; "some of my congregation just above here, on whom I called to-day, were asking me to recommend them a lodger. They are young people, without children; the house is new, and airily situated. The rooms will just suit you. But how little did I think of you coming to occupy them!"

The two friends went instantly to see them, took them, and Adam Criche went to the "Black Boy" to have Philip's luggage conveyed thence. Here that night he slept, after a long talk with Lawrence; and the next morning, after seeing from his windows the splendid view of the town, the broad Trent meadows,

and distant swells and woods unknown to him; and then, surveying his neat, newly-furnished sitting-room, he felt that he, too, was at home —at least for a time.

END OF VOL. II.

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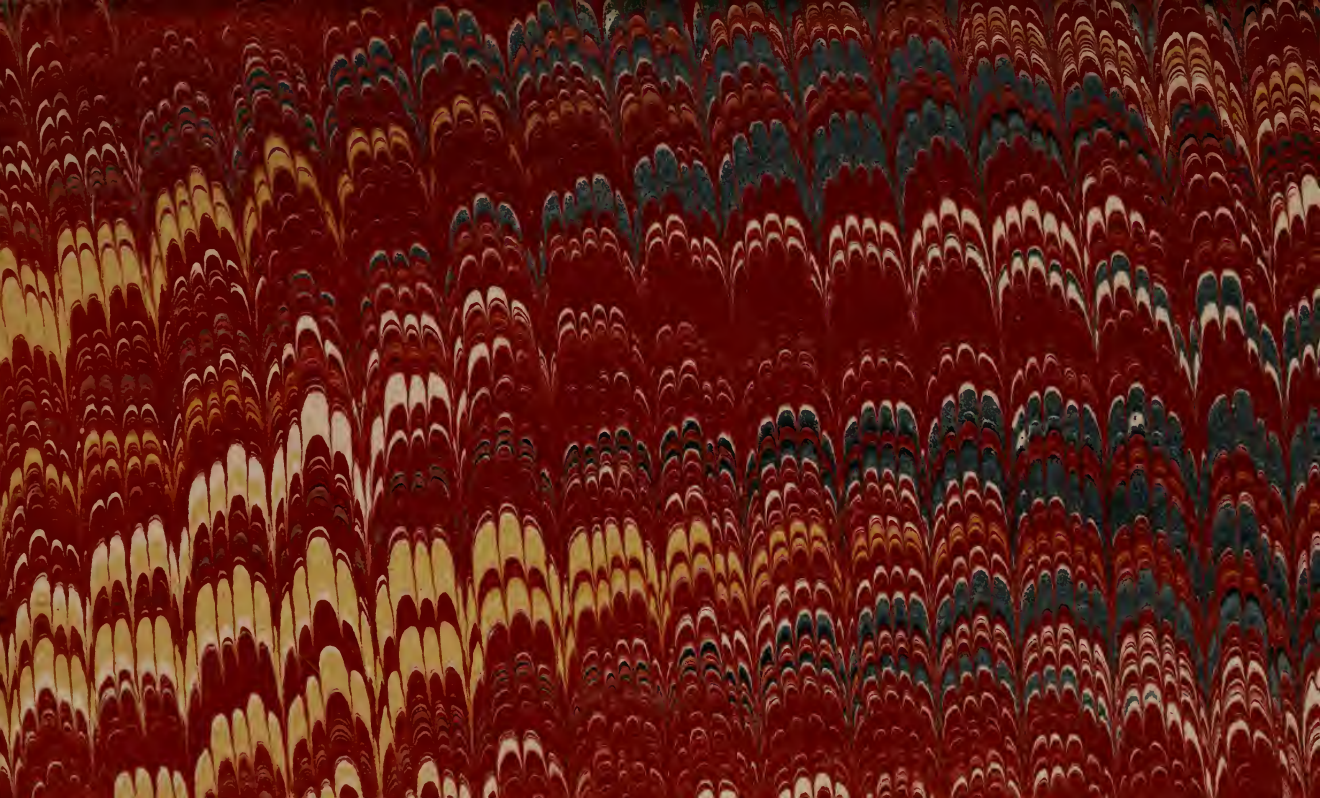

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